

Hawkins High School 1985 by madmoody

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Family, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., J. Hopper, Mike W.

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-12-10 01:08:43

Updated: 2018-01-12 17:39:42

Packaged: 2019-12-17 03:37:01

Rating: T

Chapters: 25

Words: 41,057

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Jane Hopper enrolls in Hawkins High School, and all seems normal for a while... Realistic, but still fluffy. Post-season 2. Everyone's normal life in 1985... or maybe not so normal. Mileven heavy. Spoilers. COMPLETED

1. Chapter 1

It was September of 1985 and next week was Jane Hopper's first day of high school (or any school at all). She had been studying all year, but she still worried she wouldn't be ready. Mike had been helping her with math and science, since those were his strongest subjects, and she had been pretty quick to pick up on those concepts. English, however, was the bane of her existence. She still had words of the day, and her vocabulary was expanding all the time, but she was still not big on conversation. She didn't know a lot about the world, and that made learning words more difficult for her. She enjoyed reading, but she would have to pause and look up the meaning of words pretty frequently. Hopper ensured her that even people who graduate high school still don't know a lot of words, and that made her feel somewhat better. The one thing all of her friends worried about, was how she was going to do interacting with all the mouthbreathers at school. Jane, however, was not at all worried because she simply did not care what anyone was going to think of her.

The day before school was going to start, Hopper had to take her to the High School to make sure all of her paperwork was in and she could start school this year. On the way, Hopper decided to give her some ground rules.

"Jane, I need you to promise me something," Hopper stated, his eyes still on the road.

"Yes," she replied, glancing at him.

"You can't use your powers at school, not even just to move a pencil, got it?" he asked, looking at her.

"Got it," she said, grabbing his hand. They drove the rest of the way in silence, his hand still in hers.

When they reached the school, Jim and Jane walked in and headed for the office where an incredibly bored looking secretary greeted them. Hopper started talking with her while Jane glanced around. The high school was much bigger than the middle school, but had a similar feeling to it.

"Hello, I'm Jim Hopper, we talked on the phone last week," he said smoothly.

"Right of course!," the secretary replied. "You must be Jane," she said warmly, looking at her. Jane was wearing a yellow dress and her hair, though now at her shoulders, kept its curls. She was adorable.

"Hello," Jane said nervously. She didn't know why she felt nervous, but talking to adults she didn't know always seemed to make her uncomfortable.

The secretary smiled back and turned her attention to Hopper.

"The Principal will be with you in a minute," she said, as she walked to her office, presumably to let her know the Hoppers were here.

Hopper and Jane sat down in the waiting chairs.

"Don't worry, kid. Just remember the story," Jim said softly to her. She nodded. The official story was that Jim had gotten Jane's mother pregnant without knowing, and had recently adopted her as his own. When asked what happened to her mother, Jane was supposed to say that she's sick and now she's staying with her dad. Since Terry Ives was listed on the birth certificate given to them by Dr. Owens, it would be best just to acknowledge the fact that she really was sick and unable to take care of her. That way, if anyone decided to look into it, they wouldn't get caught in a lie.

"Right this way," the secretary announced. The Hoppers stood and followed her into the Principal's office, where a woman in a pantsuit was waiting for them. She stood and shook Hopper's hand.

"Chief," she said with a nod. "Please, sit down," she offered with a smile. Once all of them were seated, the principal opened a file that was on her desk. "Alright, let's see what we have," she mumbled to herself.

The principal proceeded to pull out documents from the file. Thanks to Dr. Owens, there were forged documents to help her get into school without a hitch. "The birth certificate and the transcript are all here," she brainstormed aloud. "I'm going to need you to fill out

these," she said handing them a packet, "and I believe you'll be all set for tomorrow," she finished with a smile.

"Thanks," Hopper said, grabbing a pen. There was some stuff to sign and fill out emergency contacts and all that. Once he finished, he handed them back to the principal and they were out the door.

"See," Hopper said, "That wasn't so bad."

"No," Jane agreed. "Not so bad."

On the way home, they picked up some carry out for dinner and rented a movie. It was her last night of summer and Hopper wanted it to be a good one. Over the last few months, the Hoppers hadn't gotten into any arguments, mostly because Jane was able to see her friends, fairly frequently. Once summer had begun, Jim and moved them into a small house on the edge of town and started introducing her to some of the townies to help her transition to school life. This also meant hanging out with Mike was much easier as well. She hung out with her other friends too, but Mike was at their house at least once a week for the whole summer. Hopper acted all over-protective, but it was obvious that he liked Mike and didn't mind him spending so much time with his daughter. Hell, it even made Hopper's life easier. Happy Jane = Happy Jim. Now that they didn't have to hide Jane, Hopper bought her her own radio so she could keep in contact with her friends. The range didn't even matter, because she could simply amplify it with a quick nosebleed.

"Okay kid, you better get in the shower. You have a big day ahead of you," he smiled at her once their movie was finished.

Jane nodded and headed off down the hallway. After her shower, she was picking out her clothes for the first day. While going through her closet, which was a mixture of Mike's clothes that she had been collecting over the summer, Nancy's hand-me-downs, and clothes Hopper had bought her, Jane heard her radio softly. She picked it up and heard,

"Jane, it's Mike, do you copy? Over." She smiled and replied,

"I'm here, over."

"Are you excited for tomorrow? Over."

"Yes and no. But you'll be there, so it can't be too bad. Over."

Mike Wheeler's face lit up like a Christmas tree.

"I can't wait. Over."

"Goodnight Mike. Over."

Goodnight Jane. Over and out."

"Hey! Eggos! Get 'em while they're hot!" Jane heard from her bedroom. She shot out of bed eagerly, despite the fact that she'd barely slept from excitement. She ran into the kitchen to see a plate of eggos in front of her seat. Hopper smiled proudly at her as they sat down for breakfast. She started on her eggos basically jumping in her seat.

"It's the big day," Hopper said, sharing her excitement. She nodded and continued eating. "You nervous?" he asked. She nodded again and paused.

"What if it's too hard?" she wondered.

"It won't be, and even if it was, I'm sure that Wheeler kid would more than love to help you with your homework." Hopper tried to sound annoyed but ended up smiling at the thought.

Jane headed off into her room, determined to look perfect on her first day. She knew people may recognize her from the snowball, but she still needed to make a good first impression. Plus, maybe Mike would tell her she looked beautiful again. Grinning, she started grabbing her outfit and thought about what makeup she should put on.

The Hopper's were en route to Hawkins High with about fifteen minutes to spare, giving Jane more than enough time to find her classes so she wouldn't get lost. When the Chief's car pulled up in the loading zone, he reached for a hug from his daughter. She rolled her eyes and hugged him before stepping out of the car.

"I'm picking you up from Joyce's at 7, but if you need anything, just go to the office and ask them to call me," Hopper said worriedly.

Jane rolled her eyes. "Okay Dad."

Hopper smiled at how normal that sounded as he sped off to work, looking back at her as she trudged into the school.

Jane looked up curiously as she entered the school, her eyes combing for her friends. Her gaze landed on Mike and he waved her over excitedly. Mike was standing with Will and Dustin, Lucas hadn't arrived yet. Once she reached them, Mike wrapped her into a hug. She smiled into his chest, noting that he seemed to have even grown taller in the last week since she'd seen him. Once he released her, she gave Will a quick hug, followed by Dustin.

"El-uuh Jane, sorry, are you excited?" Dustin asked.

"Yes," she answered simply. Typical. Then, Lucas and Max walked up to them.

"Hey!" the group chorused to them. Jane looked Max up and down and then looked back at Mike smiling at him. Max and Jane didn't have any real problems, but they definitely weren't close. Jane was a little slow to warm up and Max had been trying but was making little progress. The party started comparing schedules and seeing if they shared any classes. Mike helped Jane with hers.

"I'll walk you to your classes if you want," he said to her. She nodded. They separated from the party to show her where her locker was. "I'll meet you here in between so you don't get lost, okay?"

"Sure," she said softly.

Mike took that moment to really soak her in. She had her hair basically all natural and curly, but with one clip to keep it out of her eyes. She was wearing some light brown eyeshadow and mascara that made her eyes warm and glowing. She even had a light pink sundress on that reminded him of when they snuck into AV with her. He couldn't help smiling,

"You... you look great!" Mike exclaimed.

"Thank you," Jane replied with a smile that melted his heart.

"Okay, your first class is this way..." He led her to where her classes were and soon enough, the bell rang. "I'd better go! I'll meet you at your locker!"

"Bye Mike."

Jane walked into her classroom, which was (of course), English. The teacher, Mr. Benson was stopping people and showing them their assigned seats. When she was next, she told him her name.

"Oh, you're the Chief's mysterious daughter." Jane received a couple of odd looks from her classmates after that. She nodded and he pointed her towards the middle right of the classroom. When she sat down, she glanced around her and realized who was sitting next to her.

"Hi Jane," Max said from her left.

"Hello."

"It's kinda nice, knowing someone in your class, isn't it," Max continued, trying to make small talk.

"Of course," Jane said giving a shy smile.

"People will stop staring in a couple of weeks," Max said matter-of-factly. "I was new last year."

Jane just nodded.

"So..." Max tried again. "You and Mike huh?"

"What about us?" Jane asked crossly.

"Are you two dating?"

"No," Jane said. "Should we be?"

"Well, that's up to you guys I guess," Max said with a shrug. "Me and Lucas are dating, so if you thought I liked Mike or whatever, I don't."

Jane considered that. She smiled a genuine smile back at Max.

"Friends then?"

"Yes."

Soon enough, class officially started and Mr. Benson put them to work. Jane understood mostly everything he was explaining and eventually, the bell rang. She shuffled out of class and met a grinning Mike at her locker.

"How was it?" he asked.

"Good. I have Max so at least I won't be alone."

"That's awesome! This next one is biology, we have that together!"

They starting walking to their class and Jane grabbed his hand. He smiled down at her, his heart racing. The biology class was set up with lab tables and their teacher allows them to choose their lab partners, so obviously, Jane and Mike sat together. The class went by quickly, and Mike walked her to her next class, not letting go of his hand until she had to walk into math. No one she knew was in that class, but the teacher placed her in the front, so she didn't have to talk to anyone. Next was lunch, which she was very excited about. Sure enough, Mike was waiting at her locker, lunchbox in hand. She grabbed her bagged lunch and they headed to the cafeteria. The met up with the rest of the party and dug in.

"How's it going, Jane?" Will asked her.

"Good. I like biology best." To that, Mike blushed.

Jonathan and Nancy stopped by to say hi to everyone before sitting down at their table. The rest of the day went on without a hitch, Mike walked her to every class. She ended up having another class with him, art. She had Will and Lucas in her social studies class, and Dustin in Gym. When the final bell rang, she beat Mike to her locker and was collecting her stuff when someone came up to her. She assumed it was Mike, but when she glanced up, it was a face she didn't recognize. It was a guy who was a little shorter than Mike, but still tall. He had blonde hair and green eyes. She stared at him,

waiting to see what he wanted.

"You're Jane Hopper, huh?" He asked confidently.

"Yes."

"My name's Carter. I'm a Sophomore." He put his hand out and she shook it hesitantly. When she didn't reply, he said, "Well, I hope I see you around." And with that, he walked off. She thought to herself, *that was weird.*

"Hi Jane, what did that guy want?" Mike asked her as he walked up, his eyes a little wild.

"Just said 'See you around'." She shrugged.

"Well, he's kind of a mouthbreather, so I wouldn't talk to him again," Mike said jealousy. Jane thought he looked cute when he was flustered.

"Okay Mike." She grabbed his hand and they walked outside to the bike racks, where they hopped on Mike's bike to ride with the rest of the party over to Will's. On the ride there, Jane enjoyed the feeling of being so close to Mike, and she rested her head on his shoulder. They all rode together with Max the only one skateboarding. Jane felt a bit embarrassed about when she knocked Max off of her board, but she shrugged it off. Too late now.

When they reached the Byers', they all went inside and raided the kitchen for after school snacks. Once their mouths were full of food, they all started complaining about what classes sucked and who they had to sit next to. Jane was happy that for once she understood what they were talking about. Jane took a seat next to Mike on the couch while everyone else was still gathered in the kitchen.

"Mike?" she asked.

"Yeah?" he said, looking down at her and grabbing her hand.

"Are you my boyfriend?" His eyes widened. "I was talking to Max and she said her and Lucas are dating so, are we?"

"Uh, I mean, do you want to?" He said, heat rising to his cheeks.

"What exactly do girlfriends and boyfriends do? I've seen them on TV but..." she

wondered.

"Well, they kiss and hug and miss each other when they are apart, but you can only be dating one person. One special person," he explained.

"I think we should be then," she decided. He had to refrain from laughing with glee.

"Okay!"

The others started trickling into the room then. Mike smiled softly at her before grabbing both of their backpacks. "Do you have any homework?" he asked her.

"I think so, but I might need help," she admitted.

"O-okay! I can help you!" She smiled, thinking of what her dad had said that morning.

The whole party started on the little bit of homework they had from the first day. Soon everyone was done, besides Jane, but Mike was explaining it all to her.

"I'm sorry Mike," She said suddenly.

"What? Why? You didn't do anything."

"I'm not smart enough for high school," she said, looking at the ground.

"Jane, look at me," he said fiercely. "You killed the demogorgan, you closed the gate, you saved the whole world. You can do anything, including school."

"Promise?" she asked.

"Promise." He continued explaining the concept of her algebra

homework, and after about an hour, she started to understand it. But the best part, was watching Mike explain. He was so smart and it made her oddly proud of him. She smiled, and continued her last math problem.

In the other room, Max, Lucas, Dustin, and Will were trying to play Monopoly, but they couldn't help a little gossiping too.

"I heard Carter Tims went up to her today and introduced himself," Max said.

"What? Why? Carter? To El- I mean, Jane? That makes no sense! She's just a freshman and he's POPULAR!" Dustin exclaimed. They all shushed him to make sure their friends didn't hear.

"I'll ask Mike about it later," Will decided. They all knew that Carter was a notorious player, and if Jane was his latest interest, that meant Carter would be on the prowl for her.

"How do you think the rest of it went for her?" Lucas asked.

"She seems to be doing alright. She's obviously a little quiet, but that's just her. She only really ever wants to talk to Mike," Max stated, thinking about their discussion in first period. Only when she brought Mike up did Jane engage in conversation with her.

"Well DUH," Dustin said. "They're totally googly-eyed for each other!" he said, chuckling.

"Yay! That's right!" Mike told her, as her pencil hit the table. She grinned, pleased that she had finished her homework. Mike looked at her glowing face and thought about everything she had been through. Mike had known she was something special, someone extraordinary, not only because of her powers, but because of who she was. She was the strongest person he had ever known. After she was gone for his life for 353 days, he realized how much of a void she had left in his life. As soon as she had returned to him, he never wanted to let her go. She was all he thought about anymore. Something inside of him stirred, and he kept looking into her warm brown eyes. Eyes that could kill a man without even straining, yet still remained pure and innocent when she looked at him. He leaned

in and he heard her huff a surprised breath before their lips met. This was only their third kiss, but he knew it was his favorite thing in the whole world. They parted and smiled to each other, still only inches apart.

"I'm glad you're my boyfriend, Mike."

"I'm glad you're my girlfriend, Jane."

Joyce came home at about 5:20 from her shift at the store. Lucas had gone with Max to make sure she got home okay, and Dustin had to head back to be home before dinner, so Joyce was greeted with Will, Jane, and Mike sitting on the floor of her living room, watching Indiana Jones on the TV. She noted that Mike had his arm around Jane, but chose not to say anything, and definitely would not be telling Hopper when he came to pick her up later.

"Hi Mom!" Will said when he saw her.

"Hi Ms. Byers," Mike and Jane added.

"Hello you guys! How was your first day of High School?" She asked eagerly.

"It was good," Mike said.

"I like my art teacher," Will said.

"I like lunch," Jane said.

They all laughed a little at that. Joyce smiled to herself, pleased to see that all three of them were doing well at school. She knew that high school could be cruel, but hoped they would enjoy it together. When she was in high school, she would have killed to have a friend group like Will. She smiled again, thinking of her only friend in high school. Her smoking buddy who always gave her a lighter...

Hopper sat in his office, going over some open cases. None of them were very serious. One house got tee-peed and another person had reported a bike stolen. Normal Hawkins.

"Hey Chief," Steve Harrington said. He had just been hired last month as a deputy. After the events of last year, Steve figured he really liked helping people and didn't really seem interested in college, so he went out for the Police Academy after graduation. Hopper basically had to hire him since the other two officers he had were doofuses.

"Hi kid," Hopper said.

"Jane's first day was today," Steve investigated. "How do you think she did?"

"I'm sure she's fine, you know her. She's a tough cookie." Hopper smiled, thinking of her. He glanced at the clock, which told him there was only 20 minutes left before he could pick her up from Joyce's.

"Glad to hear it." Steve returned to his desk, and grabbed an apple from Flo. Steve was still pretty close with the kids, but of course the age gap made it a little strange. He and Dustin were by far the closest and considering how much shit had happened his senior year, he didn't really want to be close with any of his old 'friends'. He laughed to himself, wondering how Dustin had done at his first day of high school...

Soon, the kids heard Hopper's car pull up. Mike quickly let go of Jane's hand. She looked at him suspiciously, but didn't say anything. Joyce opened the door for Hopper, who waltzed in and immediately opened his arms for Jane, who ran to give him a quick hug. He kissed the top of her head.

"How was it?!" he asked excitedly.

"Hard, but Mike helped me!" she told him. Hopper smiled and nodded at Mike. He let go of Jane and gave Joyce a quick side hug.

"Thanks for letting her stay," he whispered.

"Honestly, she's no trouble," she replied.

They heard another car pull up. Jonathan walked in, followed by Nancy.

"How was your first day, Will," Jonathan asked him.

"It wasn't bad," Will said, smiling.

"Okay Mike, time to go," Nancy said. With a sigh, he nodded,

"We should get going too, Kiddo. I picked up some dinner on the way over here that's getting cold," Hopper stated. Her eyes lit up at the mention of dinner.

"Bye, Will," she told her friend. "Goodbye Mike. I'll radio you before bed." She wrapped him in a big hug that gave her butterflies.

"Goodbye Jane," he whispered to her.

With that, the two of them left the Byers house and got into their separate cars, but couldn't get each other off their minds.

"So," Hopper started once they were in the car, "tell me about your first day, you little high schooler." She laughed at that. Jane loved when he goofed off with her.

"It was nice. I'm going to have to study a lot more to keep up, but it's nice. Not hiding. Being...normal."

"Oh I bet," Hopper said, a little wistfully. They drove in comfortable silence for a little while.

"Mike's my boyfriend," Jane said out of nowhere.

"What?!" Hopper exclaimed. She looked at him, confused.

"It's where you hug and kiss and-"

"I know what it means, but when did this happen?!" He didn't seem mad, just... shocked.

"Today, after school." Jane didn't seem at all bothered by Hoppers reaction, just stating very matter-of-factly.

"Well, o-okay. I guess that's fine, thanks for telling me." Hopper looked to be visibly holding back his anger, but Jane didn't seem to

notice or care.

"Sure, Dad." His heart swelled when he heard her call him that, boyfriend drama soon forgotten. Of course she had said it lots of times before, especially when they started going out in public, but she now exclusively referred to him as Dad. It felt so right to both of them. They all had started calling Eleven Jane after the gate was closed and things turned sort of normal. She was still in hiding, but she wanted a real name, not just a number. It took a while, but everyone started saying Jane, which made her feel like she really was her Mama's daughter, using the name she chose for her. Not the name Papa gave her that wasn't even a name at all. Her friends slipped up and called her El a lot at first, but they got it eventually. Jane looked down at the blue bracelet Hopper had given her to cover her tattoo. She knew it used to be his daughters and he had given it to her because she was also his daughter now. She grinned the rest of the way home. *Home*. She finally had one of those.

2. Chapter 2

Hi guys, I was super please with the feedback of this! This is my first piece of writing I've ever published. The first chapter was super long, but this one is shorter. I'm teasing a plot in this chapter so let me know what you think of it. Don't forget to review! Thanks!

Waking up for the second day of school is definitely worse than waking up the first. Even then, Mike Wheeler trudged out of bed with a smile on his face. He would get to see Jane again today! The thought gave him butterflies. He skipped down the stairs where his mother was scrambling some eggs for him while Holly watched cartoons in the living room.

"Good morning Michael," Mrs. Wheeler said to him.

"Morning Mom," he replied.

"You're in a good mood this morning," his mother noted.

"Well, yeah I guess," Mike shrugged.

"This wouldn't have anything to do with the Chief's daughter, would it?" she teased knowingly.

"Ugh Mom stop," Mike said with a legendary eye roll. His mother smiled at him. She knew they had spent practically the entire summer together and Nancy told her they danced together at the Snowball. But Karen Wheeler miraculously still had not connected the dots that Jane Hopper was the girl who lived in her basement for a week. Karen did, however, know that her son was completely head over heels for this girl. She handed Mike his plate and poured him some orange juice before he spoke up.

"Um, Mom?" he asked.

"Yes?"

"Do you think it's be alright if Jane and her dad came over for dinner

tomorrow?" Karen paused. She was not expecting that.

"Of course, I'd love that!" she told him.

"I figured you'd, well, you would want to get to really know my-uh, my girlfriend," he mumbled, not looking at her.

The puzzle pieces finally clicked. She grinned at her son. "I see, well I'm happy for you Michael... I'm glad you're telling me things now. I like hearing about your life," she said softly.

"I know. Thanks Mom," Mike finished, meeting her gaze before going back upstairs to get dressed.

Karen couldn't keep from grinning. She missed being close with her children and she was glad they were growing closer to her recently. She'd have to work on Ted though, the kids still basically ignored him. Karen made Nancy's plate as her daughter flew down the stairs.

"Hi Mom!" Nancy said, grabbing her toast and heading out the door, "Bye Mom!" She was out the door before her mother could say a word. Karen rolled her eyes. *At least I'm making progress with one.*

Mike was putting his bike on the rack when he saw the Chief's car pull up. He ran over before he drove away.

"Hi Chief!" Mike started.

"Uh hi Kid."

"Do you and Jane want to come to my place for dinner tomorrow?" Mike said with hopeful eyes.

Jane looked at Hopper excitedly. *Goddamn, I just can't say no to that face.*

"Alright, sure. See ya then, Kid."

"Bye Dad!" Jane called as she closed the car door. The chief pulled away, but not before seeing his daughter grab the Wheeler boy's hand as they walked into the school. *She could do worse,* he thought to

himself, smiling.

Jane decided that the second day was much less fun than the first day. Her English class was reading 'Romeo and Juliet' which made her want to fall asleep, her Biology class was fun, but she couldn't pay attention because she kept looking at Mike as he wrote his notes. It was a welcome distraction. Math was okay, mostly because Mike had helped her last night... Speaking of Mike, he was standing at her locker before lunch, just like yesterday. She grinned.

"How was it?" he asked on the way to their table.

"Not bad," she said, her lips turning up at the sides.

When they reached their table, they found Lucas and Dustin in a heated debate (as usual) and Will interjecting here and there trying to diffuse their argument. Max just sat there and laughed at them both. A pretty normal day.

Jane began on her bologna sandwich when someone walked up to her where she sat at the edge of the table.

"Hi there," Carter Tims said. Next to her, Jane could feel Mike fuming.

"Hi," she said, not even looking up from her sandwich.

"I know you're new and all, so if you're bored over here, there's an empty spot at my table if you want it," Carter said with arrogance. Any normal girl would kill to sit at his table. But Jane was not normal.

"No," she said distractedly. At this point, people around the cafeteria were eavesdropping on their conversation and there were a couple audible gasps at her decline. Carter looked around a little hesitantly.

"Well I hope you change your mind," he said with a coldness that she didn't like. She remembered what Hopper had told her before school had started, but she didn't care. She knew she wouldn't get caught. She glared at Carter as he walked away, and suddenly he 'slipped' and fell right on his ass. She smiled, wiped her nose, and went back to her

sandwich as the whole cafeteria erupted in laughter.

Her friends at the table looked at her with open-mouthed shock. She met their eyes and shrugged, "He's a mouthbreather."

In art, Mike and Jane sat at the same work table and they were drawing a still-life vase when Mike spoke up.

"So about lunch today..." he began.

"What about it?"

"That was kind of cool. You know, telling him no like that," Mike stumbled on his words. Jane looked up at him.

"I'd rather sit with you." Mike's cheeks got hot again.

"Thanks," he mumbled as they went back to their drawings.

After school, they all went to Will's again to do their homework. Mike helped Jane, but this time they finished around the same time as everyone else. They all hung around talking and joking until Joyce got home. Shortly after, all the kids started heading home. Mike gave Jane a big hug.

"I can't wait for you to come over tomorrow!" he exclaimed.

"Me either, Mike," she said simply.

Soon it was just Jane, Will and Joyce. They were sitting at the kitchen table, Will was drawing and Jane was going over her reading for English, nervous that she would fall behind if she didn't.

"I had a nightmare last night," Will stated. Joyce's Mom-mode was instantly turned on.

"What-what happened? Was it that...that *thing*?" She asked frantically.

"No," Jane answered cryptically. "He's gone." They Byers looked at each other and decided to take her word on it.

"It was just a normal nightmare. There were those dogs and... and I was in the upside down again. I think it was just a dream though," Will said, but there was a slight chill in his voice.

"Are you sure?" Joyce wondered.

"Yeah, it's not a big deal. We'll tell Dr. Owens at our appointment on Friday," Will resolved. Joyce seemed to accept that, but still held a worried look on her face as the kids went back to their work.

Hopper clocked out of the station and was on the way to Joyce's right at 7 o'clock. He smiled to himself, wondering how her second day went. When he pulled up the Byer's house, he couldn't help feeling a little something stirring in his stomach. It seemed to be a trend whenever he was around Joyce, but he chose to ignore it, figuring that the feeling was not mutual.

On the way home from the Byer's, Jane was pretty quiet.

"You okay," Hopper asked her.

"Yeah," she said quietly. He decided not to push her. Jane had a lot on her mind, especially with Will's nightmare. It was not possible that the Mind Flayer could still reach him. She made sure of it. *But still.* Something made her stomach uneasy when she thought about it.

The next day at school was different. Will looked tired. He had barely slept, he kept waking up after the same dream. He was in the upside down and he heard the demo dogs approaching, so he could hide. Then he would wake up. It went on like that all night, a constant loop. He hoped no one at school noticed, but he knew someone would.

Jane looked Will in the eyes and seemed to look right through him, like he was transparent. *Dream?* Will heard Jane say in his head. He nodded at her as she wiped her nose. She didn't say anything, which Will was grateful for, but he knew they couldn't keep this a secret for long. The gate may be closed, but the upside down was still there. An echo of our world. Empty.

3. Chapter 3

Here's another chapter for you guys! I hope everyone is enjoying this story! Leave me a review and let me know what you think!

"Jane! Are you ready to go to my house?" Mike asked excitedly as he came up to her locker after school. She looked at him and quickly tried to push thoughts about the Mind Flayer from her mind.

"Yes, but..." she looked at the ground. "What if they don't like me?" she asked hesitantly.

"Jane, they're going to love you! I know my mom will, she's super nice, and you already know Nancy. Plus, Holly's still pretty little so you won't have to really say anything to her. My dad probably won't talk much, and that's kind of for the best... I mean I love him and all, but he can be a mouthbreather sometimes..." Mike trailed off. Jane loved hearing him talk like this, but right now she was having a hard time focusing on the dinner, her mind drifting back to the gate.

They reached the Wheeler house and went straight for the basement. Mike's mother was upstairs getting ready for dinner and Ted hadn't gotten home from work yet, so they had some alone time before dinner. Jane glanced at the basement that had been her home for six days. Her blanket fort was still up, which she smiled at. That seemed like forever ago. She had been down here a couple times since then, after the snowball, and a couple times over the summer, but this was the first time the two of them were down here alone.

Mike and Jane sat down on the sofa, her head resting on his shoulder. It felt nice to her and she could hear Mike's heart beating.

"Jane?" he spoke up.

"Yes Mike?"

"I missed you being here," he said simply.

"Me too," she told him. Jane felt Mike kiss the top of her head and

she looked up at him. Without thinking, she lunged into a kiss. Mike felt her soft lips collide with his and instantly melted into her. Their first three kisses were short and sweet, but this had a different tone. Jane came at his mouth with a hunger that he matched. Soon, Mike had grabbed her neck and she had her hands twisted into his hair. *Wow, Mike thought, for someone who has never made out before, she's pretty good.* After a few moments, Mike pulled away, beaming.

"Why did you stop?" Jane questioned.

"It was a-amazing, but sometimes, kissing like that can get a little... uh intense. Just don't tell Hopper about that, he'll have my head," Mike worried.

"Well, I like the intense," Jane pouted. Mike grinned.

"Me too."

Hopper clocked out of the station early for his dinner with the Wheeler's. He didn't really know Mike's father very well, but Karen was nice enough, if only very clueless. He knew Nancy, though admittedly, not very well. Jim wasn't nervous, but he was a little curious to see how this played out. He arrived at the Wheeler's at about five before six and knocked on the door. Inside, Mike and Jane had emerged from the basement and were in the living room playing with Holly. They heard a solid knock and ran to get the door.

"Hi Kiddos," the Chief said, pulling Jane into a hug before ruffling both of their hair. Karen rounded the corner, still wearing her apron to greet him.

"Hello Chief," she said hospitably. "You can hang your coat on the rack and come on in." Jane grabbed Hopper's hand and led him into the house. When they were all standing in the kitchen, Karen turned to the kids and said, "Why don't you two go and tell Nancy it's time for dinner?" They nodded and ran up the stairs.

"You need any help?" Hopper offered when it was just the two of them.

"No, you're a guest," she told him, "I've got it." He leaned on the counter and nodded while Karen pulled the roast out of the oven. "They're crazy about each other," she noted, glancing at the ceiling.

"Oh, I know," Hopper said with a smile. Then, Jane, Mike, and Nancy all marched down the steps and started taking seats at the table. Karen called out to Ted and Holly in the living room, and soon everyone was seated around the dinner table. Karen sat at the head with a tall glass of wine, with Holly between her and Ted. Next to him was Nancy, and the Chief sat at the other head of the table, with Jane on his right and Mike sitting next to her.

"I hope you're hungry!" Karen said with enthusiasm as she started serving everyone. Hopper made eye contact with Jane and mouthed 'manners' to her. She nodded and began cutting her meat very delicately.

"It's delicious," Hopper told her after taking a bite. Karen nodded with a smile. Nancy turned her attention to Jane.

"How's freshman year, Jane?" Nancy asked conversationally.

"Not bad. Mike's been helping me," she said without shame. Mike blushed and stared at his potatoes.

"She was homeschooled before, so I'm pretty thankful to your boy for helping her adjust," Hopper said, looking at Mike.

"Homeschooled, huh?" Ted said looking at Jane. She nodded and he went back to his food.

"How about you, Nancy? How's Senior year?" Mike asked mockingly. She shot him a joking glance.

"It's fine," she said. "Speaking of that, Mom, do you think I could do a college tour of NYU?" She asked, looking up.

"Well, sure, but I thought you wanted to go to Indiana University?" Mrs. Wheeler replied.

"I mean, I did, but NYU is a great school and I just thought I'd explore other options," she said coolly.

"More like because Jonathon wants to go there," Mike whispered before receiving a kick from Nancy under the table. Jane laughed. Karen rolled her eyes.

"Kids... what are you gonna do?" Karen said, looking at Jim.

"What are you gonna do?" he replied, smiling.

On the way home from the Wheeler's, Jane had been quiet, which was not unusual, but what was unusual was how happy she looked.

"What are you grinning about?" Hopper asked her in the car.

"Mike," she said simply.

"So you really like him, huh?" Jim sighed.

"Yes," Jane answered, looking at him skeptically.

"I didn't say anything!" her dad said, putting his hands up in a surrendering gesture. "He's a good kid," Hopper said after a pause.

"I know," was her reply.

Mike finished brushing his teeth and was getting into bed when his mother came in.

"Michael, I had a great time at dinner tonight," she told him.

"Thanks for letting them come over," Mike said again.

"She's a little quiet," Karen said, to which Mike nodded with a smile, "but she seems nice. I'm happy for you," she whispered, kissing his head before heading out of his room.

"Mom?" She turned to look at him. "I love you."

"I love you too, Michael," she said softly, turning off his light and closing the door.

On the other side of Hawkins, Max went to sleep crying, a black eye already forming. Billy had picked her up from school today, and since the events of last year, he had cooled off on her. Max knew how Billy's dad treated him and she had tried to get her mom to leave him, but to no avail.

"Maxine, I know you miss your dad, but I love him!" her mother would tell her. It didn't look like love to her. It had always been Billy who her step-dad had bullied, but lately he had become more controlling over her mother. She had to tell him where she was going, when she would be home, and if she was ever wrong, it turned into a screaming match, which usually ended up with her mother being shoved into a wall. That was what had happened tonight. It was terrifying. Billy looked desensitized to it and barely even flinched. Max was not like that though. She tried and pull her step-father off of her mother, and ended up with an elbow to the eye. Her mother rushed to her side and Neil started to say how sorry he was and she knew her mother would believe it. She ran to her room and locked the door. That's where she was now. Crying softly, trying to get some sleep, and hoping her makeup could cover the bruise for school tomorrow.

Will Byers was in bed, trying to get a good night's sleep when he awoke suddenly. He realized he was sweating and got out of bed to get a glass of water. He looked at the clock which read 11:47. His house was quiet, his brother and mother fast asleep. He avoided looking out the windows, since what he had seen out there last year still haunted him. Soon he was back in bed, and slowly drifted off to sleep...

Will was in the upside down which was eerily calm. There was no storm, no shadow monster... no demo dogs. Just empty. In the dream, Will walked down the main street of Hawkins when he heard something. It sounded like a rustling in the trees. He looked around him frantically, but saw nothing. He started running in the opposite direction of the noise, but it only seemed to get louder, like it was closing in on him. "Will," he heard a voice say. "WILL!"

Will awoke to Jonathon shaking him awake.

"Will!" he said again.

"I'm awake," Will replied, shaken.

"You don't want to be late for school! We gotta get moving," Jonathon said, leaving the room. Will sighed in relief. It was just a dream. Just a dream.

Thanks for reading. I'm really pleased with the way this story is coming along and I've wanted to see a more Mike-supportive Hopper so I wrote one! Hopefully I'll add more Lucas and Dustin and Steve in the next one, let me know what you think!

4. Chapter 4

Let me know what you think about the direction I'm taking with this chapter, I love hearing your feedback! Thanks for reading.

Jane sat in English, staring on the worksheet Mr. Benson had just passed out. The late bell had already rung and Max still hadn't arrived. Jane glanced at the empty desk next to her and wondered why she was late. After about ten minutes, Jane looked up and saw the familiar frizzy red hair walking into the classroom. Max handed her late slip to Mr. Benson before grabbing the worksheet and sitting down. Max avoided Jane's gaze, looking at her paper solemnly.

"Your freckles," Jane said, her eyes scanning Max's face. "They're gone today." Max internally sighed. Of course her makeup would cover her freckles, totally outing the fact that she was wearing makeup, and a lot of it.

"I have concealer on, that's all," Max covered, trying to sound as inconspicuous as possible. Jane, as usual, had killer intuition and knew immediately that she was lying about something. While the two had only really begun to be close, Jane had felt a little bit of a responsibility to protect her since Max had helped her friends in her absence last year. Not to mention Jane felt guilty for being so petty to her all summer. Jane decided to let it go for now, knowing that if they kept whispering back and forth, the teacher would likely tell them to shush, which would only draw more attention to the pair. The two girls sat in silence doing their assignment until the bell rang.

Jane stood up, grabbing Max's arm.

"Bathroom." She told her simply, walking out of the room without seeing if Max was following.

Inside the privacy of the girl's restroom, Jane started on her inquisition.

"Who?" Jane asked directly.

"What? What do you mean? Who *what*?" Max replied, deflecting.

"Who hurt you? You don't wear concealer unless you have something to hide," Jane said.

"It's not a big deal," Max started, accepting defeat while still trying to downplay the actual events of last night. "It was just my step-dad. He bumped me on accident."

"Max," Jane said softly, taking her hand. "Friends don't lie."

After hearing the whole story, which Max was hesitant to tell, Jane's eyes had a coldness to them. To Max's surprise, Jane did not march off to go murder her step-father with a twitch of her head.

"Come to my house tonight, so you won't have to see him," Jane offered. Max's eyes widened.

"A-are you sure? Would the Chief be okay with it?" Max wondered. Jane shrugged.

"Doesn't matter. Do you want to?"

"Yes! Thank you, Jane." Max said, her lips turning up into a smile.

Dustin sat in social studies, waiting impatiently for the bell to ring. Hismom had packed him a Three Musketeers bar and he was itching in his seat to get a taste of that nougat. After what seemed like an eternity, the lunch bell rang and he practically ran to their lunch table to dig in. He was the first to arrive, followed by Will and then Max.

"I can't believe you love those things so much," Will judged, looking at the blissful expression on Dustin's face as he took a bite of his candy bar.

"Let me enjoy my candy in PEACE, Will!" Dustin said with flare. Laughing, Will opened his lunch box and started on his sandwich.

"Where's your lunch, Max?" Will questioned. She was sitting with her chin in her hands and no bagged lunch in front of her.

"I forgot to pack it," she said with a shrug. "I was running late this morning."

"Here," Dustin said, handing Max his pudding. She grabbed it with a small smile. "Are you feeling okay, Max? You look a little pale," Dustin continued.

"Yeah, I just overslept today so I'm kind of out of it," Max said. Dustin wondered for a moment whether she was lying about something, but he didn't really want to press her. Then, the rest of the party came to join them, and Lucas was at Max's side, which made her feel a little better.

Jane kept a close eye on Max during lunch. She knew Max didn't want to tell anyone, and Jane understood that. But still, the thought of having to live with a Bad Man like Max's step-father made Jane's skin crawl. Mike seemed to be catching on to Jane's mood and looked down at her with concern.

"You okay?" he asked her. She shrugged in response. "What's wrong?"

"Max lives with a Bad Man," Jane told him.

"Billy? I thought she took care of that..." Mike trailed off, thinking of her use of Steve's nail-studded bat at the Byers' last year.

"Not Billy. Step-father," Jane explained. Mike's eyes widened in understanding. He took a glance at Max from across the table and noticed that she did look a bit off today. Why hadn't he noticed sooner?

Before the lunch period was over, Jane made her way to the office to call her dad and tell him that Max was staying over tonight.

"Hawkins Police Station, how may I help you?" Flo's voice said.

"It's Jane, I need to talk to Hopper," Jane replied softly.

"Oh hello sweetheart, I'll get him on the line for you!" Flo told her.

"Thank you," Jane breathed. She liked Flo. She was always nice to her.

"Hey Kiddo, is something the matter?" Hopper's worried voice asked through the phone.

"Nothing's wrong, just telling you Max is spending the night. It's a girl's night, my firsts school weekend," Jane stated, not even bothering to make it a question.

"I don't know, I don't really want you two at the house alone until I get home," Hopper said with his 'Dad voice'.

"But she needs my help, she lives with a Bad Mad," Jane whispered.

"I see," Hopper sighed. "Okay, fine Kid. But no more Bad Man talk over the phone, you got it?" Hopper said, paranoid as ever. "And tell the Wheeler kid not to come over until I'm home from work," Hopper continued.

"Okay, thank you Dad," Jane said, hanging up.

In his office, Hopper made a note to check up on the Hargrove/Mayfield family...

"Harrington!" Steve heard from Hopper's office. He strolled in and leaned against the door frame.

"What's up, Chief?"

"I'm putting you on patrol tonight, and pay extra attention to the Hargrove house. Let me know if you see anything suspicious."

Steve nodded, a little nervous.

"Sure thing."

5. Chapter 5

Sorry for the late upload, I had an exam to study for! I hope you enjoy this chapter!

Mike and Lucas walked Max and Jane to the Hopper residence before heading to Mike's for a D&D campaign with Will and Dustin. When they got to Jane's small house, the boys said their goodbyes, with Mike promising to stop by after the campaign tonight.

"Home," Jane said to Max as she telepathically opened the lock on the door. It was totally undetectable for someone who didn't see Jane's hand swiftly remove the blood forming from her nose.

"It's...pretty," Max said, entering the small living room. Jane chuckled at the word choice which mimicked what Mike had said to her almost two years ago.

"I'll show you around," Jane offered. She led Max further into the living room, which was basically one couch, a coffee table, and one recliner chair, all facing the TV. It had yellow walls and two windows, both adorned with thick white curtains. "Living room, where we watch TV," Jane explained, gesturing to the room around her. "Next," Jane continued, "the dining room, where we eat eggos."

The dining room was separated from the living room by one narrow archway and had white walls and one small wooden table with four seats around it. It was connected to the kitchen, which was also small. It had wooden cabinets and white countertops. The windows in this part of the house were also heavily draped.

"Kitchen," Jane said before leading her back through the living room and down the only other archway. It was a short hallway that only had four doors. "Dad's room," she gestured to the first on the left. "Bathroom," she said to the one on the right. "Basement," Jane gestured to the second on the left. "And, my room!" she finished with enthusiasm, leading Max into her bedroom.

"Wow," Max said, entering. This room was a very pale pink with a

plain white bed that had comfortable-looking pillows on it and a brown teddy-bear. There was a dresser with a mirror, and a desk that had lots of books and her radio on it. This room also had heavy-looking curtains on the windows. "You guys like your privacy, huh?" Max commented.

"Safety," Jane explained and Max gave her an apologetic look, now understanding.

"I like it, Jane. It's very... you."

"Thank you."

Max sat down on the bed with Jane, trying not to feel awkward. This was basically the first time the girls had ever hung out alone.

"How are you and Mike?" Max asked, figuring that would get the quiet curly haired girl talking. Jane grinned at the sound of his name.

"Very good," Jane said, "He's my boyfriend." Max smiled back at her.

"He finally asked you?" she chuckled.

"I asked him, actually," Jane said with a little attitude. Max raised her eyebrows.

"I love that!" Max exclaimed. "Girl's shouldn't have to wait around for guys to make the first move when we can do it ourselves!" Jane laughed, agreeing. She glanced down at her arm, moving her bracelet aside to look at her tattoo. Max resisted looking, trying not to be rude, but couldn't help glancing down as well. Her arm read 011, and Max had known that was her name for the first thirteen years of her life. The thought made her feel terrible. Here Max was, staying the night at Jane's house to get away from her step dad, while Jane had dealt with years of trauma far worse that anyone could imagine with no possible way to get away from it. The thought made Max sick to her stomach.

"Girls can do anything," Jane finally said, bringing Max out of her thoughts.

"You're damn right."

Billy sat in his house, smoking cigarettes and listening to music (his usual routine), when he heard his dad get home. His step-mother had been frantic all day, worrying about his bitch of a step-sister, Max. Apparently, she had gotten a little roughed up last night and didn't come home from school yet. Billy knew that her knew her and her weirdo friends were usually hanging out late after school, but he didn't really care much to chime in.

"I'm going to look for her, stay here in case she comes back, Neil," Susan Hargrove had said, heading out the door. Billy rolled his eyes, before trudging out the door, getting into his Camero, on the way to a good old Hawkins house party.

Becky Richards was throwing an epic house party, which Nancy had dragged Jonathon to go to.

"Come on, let loose! It'll be fun!" Nancy had convinced him. Jonathon had a hard time saying no to her, so he finally relented. This year had been a huge change for Jonathon in a lot of ways. He was no longer the 'loner' or 'freak'. Ever since he and Nancy started dating, people seemed to... like him more. He still preferred only Nancy's company, but he slowly started making connections to Nancy's friends as well as others in his class who had ignored him for years. Jonathon was nice enough to them, but he kept his distance for the most part.

"Come on it," Becky greeted them, as she sipped out of a solo cup. Nancy gave Jonathon a loving glance before grabbing his hand and dragging him to the dance floor. Billy Hargrove spotted the pair as they entered the party. He knew Nancy was that Harrington kid's Ex, but for the life of him, Billy could not see why Nancy had chosen Jonathon over Steve. With a shrug, Billy went back to shot-gunning a beer and glanced around the room, looking for a girl he was going to get lucky with tonight.

Hopper was in his office 'contemplating', when Flo came in.

"Hop, Susan Hargrove is here, she can't find her daughter Maxine," Flo told him. Jim internally groaned, knowing that Max was at his

own house. *She really couldn't even call her mom to tell her she was at a sleep over?*

"Send her in."

It had been a relaxing night for Jane and Max. Jane had put on the TV and heated them up some premade dinners in the microwave. Max thought she sort of understood Jane a little better now. She was definitely not one of the most talkative people in the world, but she was very observant and had a strong personality when she decided to show it. Their evening so far had consisted of mostly small conversations (generally Mike or Lucas centered, but also about school and English class), and Max trying her best not to gawk every time Jane changed the TV channels with her mind.

When the girls were watching E.T. and eating eggos (which Jane had explained were considered breakfast *and* dessert), the Hopper house's phone rang. Jane looked at it before shrugging and picking up.

"Hello?" she said in her soft voice,

"Jane, it's your dad here. Put Max on the phone, I have her mother here at the station, she's been looking for her," Hopper said. Max had heard through the phone and rolled her eyes. *Of course NOW my mom cares.* Jane handed her the phone.

"Hi," Max said, slightly sarcastically.

"Oh Maxine, I've been looking for you for two hours! Why didn't you tell me you were staying with your new friend?" Susan gasped frantically.

"Gee, Mom, I have no idea. It's almost like I hate living in my own home." The sarcasm was now so thick, you could cut it with a knife.

"Maxine, we'll talk about his at home tomorrow, I'm just glad you're safe... I love you," Susan said, sounding defeated.

"Love you too, Mom." Max hung up the phone. Jane looked at her sympathetically, but said nothing.

The Wheeler basement erupted in argument over what the dice had actually landed on when they fell on the floor. Will swears he saw a six, but Dustin wasn't convinced.

"You moved it, I know it! There's no way you rolled the perfect amount, first try!" Dustin accused. Lucas nods to this.

"If Will said it was a six, then it was," Mike said calmly. Will caught Mike's eye and gave a grateful smile. "Will doesn't lie. And," Mike continued in his theatrical Dungeon Master voice, "Will the Wise avoids the Dragon and makes his way to safety!"

Will stands up and cheers, while Dustin and Lucas can't help but smile at the sight. Their friend had been through enough, and deserved to be this happy and carefree.

"I guess the campaign's over," Mike concludes.

"Michael," Kareen Wheeler calls from upstairs. "Joyce is here for Will!"

"Okay!" Mike says back.

"I'd better get going too," Dustin said, getting up.

"What time is it?" Lucas asked. Mike glanced at his watch.

"Eight-thirty!" Mike exclaimed, looking at Lucas. They both knew what that meant. The Chief was home and they could stop by the Hopper's for a visit. Dustin rolled his eyes. There really was no hope for those two. Steve needed to give them some girl advice, Dustin decided on his way home, not thinking about the fact that neither Steve or Dustin had a girlfriend and the other two did.

Steve was on patrol with Powell who was in the passenger seat, going on about why he didn't like the taste of cooked carrots. Steve drove through the town trying to drown out his partner when he noticed a familiar face getting into a car, or rather, being half carried to a car. He parked and got out of his car.

"Jonathon?" Steve questioned.

"Oh god, sorry Steve! It looks like Nancy had a little too much, um again." Jonathon looked like he wanted to crawl out of his skin in that moment.

"Of course she did," Steve said, half to himself. "Make sure you get her home, alright?" Steve said, turning on his cop voice.

"S-sure!" Jonathon answered, getting his girlfriend into the seat and buckling her in nice and tight. With a wishful glance, Steve got back into the car and slowly continued down the street.

Steve hated patrol.

6. Chapter 6

Exams are over, so I should be back to updating everyday again! There's a bit of mileven fluff in this chapter, let me know if you like it or if it's too cheesy! Also, a special thanks for so many kind reviews, they mean a lot to me!

"You're gonna love it, Kiddo," Hopper said to his daughter. Jane stared at the Jiffy-Pop skeptically.

"Trust me, he's right," Max said, nodding. With a shrug, Jane put the Jiffy-pop on the burner. When the foil started to rise, her eyes widened. It was so strange! She kept waiting for the expansion inside to cause the foil to burst, but it held its own. When it was finished, Hopper poured the popcorn into a bowl for the girls.

"Before you two run off into her room, Max, we should talk," the Chief said. Sighing, Max sat on the couch with Jane, looking at Hopper in the recliner.

"I know I should have told my mom where I was, but I just didn't really want to talk to her." Max looked upset, but was playing it off as if she didn't care.

"I get that kid, I do, but you need to tell me exactly what's going on," Hopper said, leaning forward. "Why don't you want to be at home? Is it your step brother? Step dad?"

"Both, but this time step dad," she paused. "He's not... good to us," Max continued vaguely. Hopper gestured for her to continue. Max glanced at Jane, who nodded in support, grabbing her hand. "He gets really... angry at my mother. I tried to get him to leave her alone, and he pushed me. I've talked to my mom about him before, but she won't leave him. I... I just didn't know what to do, but I don't want to go back there." Max finished, voice shaking.

"Well, here's what I can do. I can call a buddy I know who's in Child Services and get him working on a case for you. In the meantime, if you would rather stay here, you're more than welcome." Max's eyes

brightened at the thought of being able to stay longer. "But," Hopper continued, ignoring how her eye's fell when he did, "you'll have to talk to your mom. Tomorrow."

"Of course, thank you!" Max said. Hopper smiled and headed into the kitchen to heat himself up some dinner when there was a knock on the door.

"Who is it?" Hopper yelled from the kitchen.

"Mike and Lucas!" Jane replied. Hopper rolled his eyes and went to stand in the archway. Jane was leading them to her bedroom with her bowl of popcorn in hand.

"Hey!" Hopper called, causing every kid to turn his way. "The door stays open, got it? And no funny business!"

The kids nodded aggressively before heading to Jane's room. Once inside, Mike and Jane quickly claimed the bed and Max and Lucas took the floor. With a twitch of Jane's head, her boombox started playing some Madonna (who was currently her favorite artist). The music helped to mask their conversations from being overheard by Hopper, and also to set a mood for the room.

Lucas took Max's hand in his and started rubbing circles on hers with his thumb. Max looked at him softly before resting her head on his shoulder. Lucas looked up at Mike and Jane who were whispering softly to each other and eating popcorn. They were such an adorable couple, Lucas thought. Though when he had first met who they then called Eleven, he had thought she was a weirdo, Lucas had grown to understand her better and in turn, had understood why Mike was so smitten with her. *They are a cute couple*, he thought again. Lucas held Max tighter, thinking of how lucky he had been to be with her. He smiled. Lucas knew that Neil had been becoming possessive over Max's mother, but he never would have thought that he would put a hand on Max. When she'd told him during second period he had half a mind to grab the best rock he could find and put his Wrist Rocket to work on Neil Hargrove's face.

"How's your eye?" Lucas asked her. She lifted her head to look at him.

"It doesn't hurt that much, I've just had a headache all day. I should probably wash this makeup off to get a better look at it," Max explained. Lucas nodded as she stood up to go wash her face in the bathroom. In her absence, Lucas stood and grabbed some popcorn, deciding to crash Mike and Jane's conversation.

"How's your first sleepover going, Jane?" Lucas asked, raising his eyebrows comically.

"It's nice. She's sweet," Jane said simply. As if on cue, Max entered the bedroom again, this time bearing a purplish-blue halo around her right eye.

"Is it that bad?" Max asked, reading her friend's faces.

"No, no of course not," they all denied a little too hard. Max laughed and grabbed onto Lucas' hand again.

Will was in the shower, thinking over his day and trying to massage the stress knots out of his neck. School had been normal. He had gone to his appointment with Dr. Owens, where he'd explained the dreams he'd been having. Dr. Owens hadn't been as skeptical as he was last year, but still didn't seem very worried about what the boy had been seeing.

"Well, maybe you're just able to get glimpses of that world," he had explained with a shrug. Neither Will nor his mother were entirely pleased with that answer, but since his brain scans were normal, they decided not to dwell on it. Will just hoped he'd be able to sleep tonight.

When Will was out of the shower, he and his mom were scrolling the TV channels, looking for something to watch together. Will was sipping his Coca-cola when his mother had landed on a channel that was playing the movie 'Mr. Mom'. Will quickly glanced at his mother, wondering how she would react. She sat still for a moment, before giving a sigh and switching the channel again.

Joyce had been slowly getting over Bob's death. She felt immensely guilty, knowing that if she had never been close to him, he would

probably still be alive. She shoved that thought to the back of her mind, knowing that if she dwelled too long, it would eat her alive. Joyce need to be strong for her boys. She just had to.

Mike was lost in Jane's eyes. She was smiling back at him as they leaned on her headboard eating popcorn. Her dimples would make an appearance every once in a while when she chewed. He loved noticing things like that about her. Mike wanted to memorize her face. After living without her for 353 days, Mike never wanted to miss a single detail of her ever again.

Jane was looking back at Mike. She liked his freckles a lot, they reminded her of the stars. She liked how he looked at her like she was the only person in the world. She liked how he had been the first person she remembered who treated her like a human being. The stars on Mike's face reminded her of a bittersweet memory. Back at the lab, she had never seen the stars, but after making some progress translating a far-off conversation in the bath, she had been rewarded with an astronomy book. It was the first item that had let her know something that kept her going for a long time: *she was not alone*. There were millions of stars and planets accompanying her, as well as people and places she had never been. It made her hopeful that someday she would be able to be out there in the world. Her mind drifted back to the present.

"Something wrong?" Mike questioned, watching Jane's smile falter.

"No," she says, looking back at him, a smile resuming on her face. Mike knew there was a lot more to Jane that she wasn't sharing with him, or with anyone. He wanted to give her space, but he also didn't want her to hold her burdens alone. Without thinking, Mike leaned in for a kiss. For that moment, Jane and Mike were in their own solar system among the stars and nothing else mattered.

"It's almost ten boys, you'd better get going," Hopper called from the living room. All four teenagers sighed.

At 11:30, Nancy Wheeler had finally sobered up enough to be left alone for the night, thanking Jonathon for going to that stupid party

with her in the first place. Now the eldest Byers was driving home. When he reached their house, he figured his mother and brother would be asleep, or close to it. Once inside the house, his suspicions were confirmed. The house was silent. He got ready for bed being as quiet as he could not to wake them. When he was leaving the bathroom, he heard a whimper coming from Will's bedroom. Jonathon slowly opened his brother's bedroom door and saw Will lying on his back seemingly paralyzed with a look of intense terror on his face. A few more moans left his lips and Jonathon rushed over to wake him.

"Will! WILL! Wake up, it's just a nightmare!" Jonathon tried. He shook his brother, still attempting to stir him awake. Jonathon went on yelling and shaking him, which woke his mother up in the other room. Joyce was there in a flash.

"What's happening?!" she asked.

"I think he's having a dream again, but I can't get him to wake up!" Jonathon explained. Suddenly, Will's eyes shot open and he heaved a shaky breath.

"Will?" Joyce called. "Honey, are you awake?" Will looked back at her close to tears and nodded.

"I was there. I was actually *there!* It was not a vision or a dream, I was in the upside down," he exhaled in a shaky breath. "And there's more than just demo dogs there now."

7. Chapter 7

Okay guys, this chapter is a little different, but I hope you guys get where I'm going with this plot-wise! Don't forget to review and let me know what you think!

Jim Hopper was on his porch smoking a cigarette when he heard his phone ringing. He quickly discarded the cigarette and rushed inside to answer it before it woke up the girls.

"Hello?" Hopper spoke into the phone.

"Hop, it's Joyce! How fast can you get over here? And you might want to bring your girl."

Will sighed in relief when he heard the Chief's car pull up on their gravel driveway. His shirt was drenched in sweat from his dream, but he felt cold and kept shivering. His mother had wrapped him up in a blanket and was running her hands through his hair soothingly.

Will had no words to describe how much he loved his mother. She had always been the most supportive person he had ever met. She was odd, of course, but she had raised Jonathon and Will to appreciate themselves for who they were, and not for what other people thought of them. Even through all the shit that had happened between her and his father, Joyce had always kept her kids' happiness as her first priority. She had even traveled to another dimension to find her son, for God's sake. Will had faith that their family could make it through anything together, but right now, he just wanted to talk to Jane. She was the only one who would understand.

Jonathon opened the door, quickly shaking Will from his thoughts. He looked up to see Hopper walk into the living room, followed by Jane and Max, who were still in their pajamas. Jane walked right up to Will and looked at him.

Eggs hatched? Will heard in his mind. He nodded at her and Jane's

face grew cold in realization.

Her wound was festering, as Papa had told her in the vision Kali had conjured up. The upside down was an echo of the material world, a world that was home to monsters she had unintentionally unleashed. Jane had confidence that she could kill anything that could harm her friend, but she knew it would only be a temporary solution. New eggs would hatch and more monsters would wreak havoc. In that moment, both Jane and Will knew the only true solution to their problem. She had to kill the Mindflyer.

The whole invisible exchange of knowledge between her and Will had only taken a moment, and the rest of the room was unaware that anything had occurred at all. Joyce stood up from the couch to look Jane in the eyes.

"Do you know what's wrong with him?" Joyce asked.

"Yes," Jane said simply.

"What can we do?" the frantic mother continued.

"Keep him awake tonight. He has to be in this world when I kill it," Jane told her cryptically. This peaked Hopper's interest.

"Hold on Missy, what exactly are you going to be killing?" Hopper asked in concern.

"The Mindflyer."

Max shared a glance with the others in the room, like *Is she serious?* She was.

"No no no no no," Hopper stated, shaking his head. "You can't just kill some monster who we don't even understand yet, especially with no plan! How would you even face it? The gate's closed!"

Jane pointed at Will slowly.

"Gate," she said. Will felt like his skin had peeled off and he was left exposed. *He was a gate.* The thought made him shiver.

"We still need a plan," Jonathon spoke weakly. The others looked around exhaustedly.

"Hold on," Hopper said, heading back out to his car. He flipped on the radio. "Harrington! Gather up the kids and meet me at the Byers, we have a situation."

Mike Wheeler was crammed in the back of Steve's police car between Lucas and Dustin. Nancy was in the passenger seat next to Steve as they drove to Murkwood. Mike felt incredibly guilty for not noticing that something was going on with Will again. Maybe he had been spending too much time with Jane... *no*, he thought, *but I should have paid more attention to my best friend.*

When they arrived, all of them gathered at the dining room table to start brainstorming a plan. Mike immediately sat in the space between Jane and Will.

"Okay, so what do we know?" Hopper began. Will took a shaky breath.

"The upside down... It's becoming more complex. There are new species hatching, and a larger population of them," Will explained.

"Do you think they're still connected to the Mindflayer through a hive mind?" Dustin chimed in.

"I don't know, I haven't seen that... thing since last year," Will answered, grimacing.

"But now, when you see the other monsters, it's only when you're asleep, right?" Mike asked, intrigued.

"Yes."

"Maybe there's some type of unconscious connecting between you and the upside down that only opens when you're in your most vulnerable state: asleep," Lucas suggested. They all pondered that for a moment before Max spoke up.

"Jane, do you think the upside down left some type of psychic

imprint on Will from when he was trapped there?" Max asked. Everyone looked at Jane.

"Not Mindflyer is still there, I can feel him. I can reach it through Will. In the bath," Jane said solemnly.

"Should we rush into this? I mean, Will hasn't been harmed yet. I think we can spare some time to prepare. I can't lose you again, neither of you!" Mike exclaimed, looking between Jane and Will. Joyce contemplated, her hand over her mouth.

"Well, if we do wait, what can we do in the meantime to make sure Will's safe?" Steve asked.

"He can't stay awake forever, this isn't 'Nightmare on Elm Street'," Nancy said.

"I can keep him safe," Jane chimed in. Hopper looked at her curiously. She met his gaze and continued, "If I'm with him, the Mindflyer won't try to reach him." Jane sounded so confident in what she was saying, everyone simply believed her without question.

"Alright," Hopper relented. Max and Jane set up camp in Will's room, where they would sleep. Jane was on the bed with Will, holding his hand tightly and Max had set up a sleeping bag on the floor. Steve took the other boys and Nancy back home so their parents wouldn't freak out if they discovered them missing in the middle of the night. Jonathon reluctantly went back to his room, keeping his door open so he could see into Will's in case anything happened. That left Joyce and Hopper, who stayed up in the living room, chain smoking on the couch.

"I-I don't know if I can do this again, Hop," Joyce said to him quietly. He looked down at her with a wistful glance.

"I know," was his reply as he took her under his arm. So softly that she couldn't tell whether she'd imagined it or not, Joyce felt his lips kiss the top of her head.

8. Chapter 8

Thank you so much for the awesome reviews! They give me so much inspiration! I hope you all enjoy this chapter even though it's short, hopefully the next will be more interesting! Happy reading!

Will tried to close his eyes, but even with Jane's reassuring grip on his hand, he was still worried to drift off to sleep. He glanced over at Jane, who was lying next to him. Her eyes were closed, but he could tell by her breathing that she was still awake.

"He won't get to you. Not this time," Jane whispered, breaking the silence of the room. Will looked back up at her to see her eyes partially open, looking into his.

"Thank you. For everything," Will responded. He closed his eyes again, and for whatever reason, Jane's words abled him to fall into a dreamless sleep for the first time that month.

Hopper woke up, panic rising in his chest when he didn't immediately recognize where he was. He soon realized he was still in the Byers' living room, his neck sore from the awkward position he had fallen asleep in next to Joyce. Hopper knew from the fact that he had a blanket draped delicately over him that Joyce had put it on him before heading to her own bedroom to sleep. Jim couldn't help smile at the idea. He rubbed the sleep out of his eyes when he glanced at the digital clock that read 5:36 am. Hopper figured he might as well stay up. He went to get a pot of coffee going and lit a cigarette while he was waiting. Jonathon had entered the kitchen shortly after the pot of coffee had been made. The young man gave Hopper a nod and a smile as he grabbed a mug and got himself a cup.

"Sleep okay, Chief?" Jonathon asked in his quiet voice, trying to make the conversation light.

"Never better," Hopper replied, sipping his black coffee. He didn't really have that strong of an opinion on Joyce's oldest boy. He knew

Jonathon was a good kid with a big heart, but Hopper didn't exactly have conversations with the kid that Joyce wasn't a part of. The two men sipped their coffee for a moment in silence before Jonathon spoke up again.

"She really appreciates you," Jonathon stated. "My mom, I mean. Well, we all kind of owe you." He finished sheepishly.

"No kid, don't worry about it. If it's anyone we should owe, it's Jane," Hopper said, noticing how his chest felt tighter in pride when thinking of how much she had helped everyone, time and time again. Jonathon took another gulp of his coffee.

"You got that right, Chief."

Mike tossed and turned in his bed, not being able to get comfortable. He kept drifting off to sleep, only to wake with anxious thoughts and a pounding in his chest. He felt like there was a pit in his stomach thinking of Will's situation. What kind of friend was he to Will if he hadn't even noticed him struggling this time? Mike felt extremely guilty about not being there for Will. He felt his throat tighten. Glancing at his clock, it read 6:12. He decided to get in the shower, not caring that it was so early on a Saturday morning. After toweling off, Mike got dressed for the day and headed down the stairs. Holly had just gotten up and Mike's mother was getting her breakfast ready.

"Ted, you're up early- oh Mike! What are you doing up?" Karen said as she turned to face the sound of feet coming down the stairs.

"Couldn't sleep I guess," Mike shrugged. Karen didn't look convinced. "I'm gonna head over to Will's today. He's been having a rough first week," Mike explained, knowing that this would gain his mother's sympathy.

"That poor boy," Karen murmured. "Of course Michael, I hope he feels better, he's been through enough," she said, not even knowing the half of it.

Mike nodded and got himself some cereal before mounting his bike and peddling down to Will's.

Max woke up on Will's floor. Groaning, she got out of her sleeping bag, looking up at the bed to find Will still completely asleep and Jane wide awake, still holding his hand in a death grip. Max smiled at Jane, who put her finger to her mouth to motion for Max to keep quiet. The redhead nodded in understanding before creeping out of the room and into the living room, where Joyce, Hopper, Mike, and Jonathon were sitting around the dining room table. Hopper stood up and offered his seat to Max, who smiled and sat down.

"How is he?" Mike asked her in a hushed whisper.

"Sound asleep," she replied. "I think whatever Jane was doing... It worked. He looked so peaceful." Joyce sighed in relief.

"Can I get you anything?" Jonathon offered.

"I'll take some coffee. Black," Max responded, looking up at him with a smirk.

Jane sat in Will's bed next to her sleeping friend. She had slept last night, but not very much. Jane had been on a little bit of a secret mission that she didn't want to share with anyone. While she had been making sure that the Mindflyer would not come for Will in his dreams, she had also been searching Will's mind for the Mindflyer's weaknesses. She was still planning her kill. Jane knew it hated fire and heat. She also knew how she had been able to push against its forces when she had closed the gate, meaning her powers would work against it. What Jane didn't know, was how it had been able to make Will a gateway into his dimension. Jane had always wondered why she had a connection to Will ever since he had gone missing. She had figured it was just because her mind was the one that had essentially created the upside down, where Will was for six days. But that didn't make sense. The Mindflyer hadn't revealed itself to anyone until the next year. Why? Why did the Mindflyer choose Will? Did he truly have 'true sight' as the boys called it? That's what she was trying to figure out. Maybe the Mindflyer had been operating through the Demogorgon who took Will and that's why when she had killed the monster, there was no body left behind. Jane combed through Will's memories, looking for an answer, a missing

puzzle piece. She was only left more confused.

"Jane," Will looked at her through sleepy eyes. She immediately turned red, hoping that the guilt she was feeling of looking into his mind was not obvious.

"Sleep okay?" she asked.

"Never better."

Will was in the shower after everyone had eaten breakfast. Max, as she had promised Hopper, went to talk to her mom about staying with Jane for the rest of the weekend. Jane was sitting with Mike on the couch, their hands intertwined. Joyce, Jonathon, and Hopper were in the hallway talking in hushed voices. Everyone was pleased that Jane could help Will right now, but the same thought plagued them all. This could not go on forever, and what should they do about it?

9. Chapter 9

Thank you so much for reading, don't forget to review and let me know how I'm doing! I'm trying to balance 'normal' with the plot, so let me know what you think! Enjoy!

Susan Hargrove was getting ready for work Monday morning when she heard a knock on the front door.

"Hello, are you Mrs. Hargrove?" A man asked when she opened the door.

"Yes, and who are you?" was her reply.

"I'm Ed Richards, from Social Services..."

At Hawkins high, Will sat in Art, immersed in his drawing. He had had a restful weekend with Jane. She had slept over every night, along with Max and Hopper. It was the most rested Will had felt in a long time. His mom and Chief Hopper kept trying to come up with a better plan to keep Will from the upside down again, but no one had any other suggestions besides Jane's. She wanted to kill that thing once and for all. He knew it would take time to prepare her for the kill and that it would take a lot of convincing on their part to get the parents on board, but they both knew it was the only way. He tried not to think that far ahead and focused back on his drawing.

Max had met up with her mom for breakfast on Saturday, where her mother apologized for Neil's actions yet again. Max tried to explain that she wasn't happy living with them. Susan was understanding to a point, but her solution was always "I'll talk to him." As if that was going to somehow erase all of the abusive tendencies her step father had. It was all bullshit. By the end of breakfast, Max was nearly in tears and couldn't wait to head back to the Byers, where she knew she wouldn't be treated like shit. Now it was Monday morning, in English with Jane. Max was dreading heading home from school today. She really hoped Hopper's buddy had come by, because Max

didn't know how much longer she could take it.

At lunch, the party sat at their usual table, talking about the usual nerdy stuff they liked. Jane sat at the end of the table, listening to the conversation, but not being one to chime in often. Mike sat between her and Will, Mike's thy touching hers every so often when he got animated into he conversation. Jane couldn't help but smile at the electricity she felt at his touch. Soon, Jane saw a figure coming her way. She looked up and saw Carter Tims walking right up to her. Mike stiffened next to her and the rest of her friends looked up at him anxiously, as if not exactly sure what was about to unfold.

"Hey Jane, can I talk to you for a minute?" Carter said, gesturing for her to stand up. Jane looked at him and tilted her head. She reluctantly got up, her body language indicating that she was in 'bitchin' mode right now. Mike stared as she stood up to go stand a few feet from the table to go talk to Carter. Mike was feeling very insecure about the amount of attention Carter had been giving her lately, but he couldn't exactly do much about it. He was just some nerd after all, and Carter was practically Jesus at Hawkins High.

"So, I know you were homeschooled and all, but did you know there's a homecoming dance coming up?" Carter asked with a raised brow and smoldering eyes.

"Yes," was her short reply.

"I was wondering, if you'd wanna go with me? I mean, it's really an honor to be asked by an upper classman. I had to ask you because you're just so cute for a freshman," Carter continued confidently. He seemed oblivious to Jane's complete lack of interest. "So, you in?"

Jane looked into his eyes with that signature badass glare.

"No," she said forcefully. "I'm with Mike." Jane turned on her heel, leaving the other boy in the dust. Carter, not knowing what rejection felt like, grabbed her arm as she walked away. Mike instantly stood up, knowing this was brewing a perfect storm. Almost too calmly, Jane turned back to Carter.

"You don't mean that! You and frog-face? Come on!" Carter exclaimed, drawing the cafeteria's attention. Carter looked at Mike Wheeler and Jane Hopper, trying to find a reason that she would ever choose Mike over him.

"Let go." Jane looked down at his arm and pulled her hand away while simultaneously fracturing his fingers with her mind. The other students would just figure she had a really strong arm, but her friends knew what she had really done. She walked back to her seat as Carter clutched his hand in pain.

"You're a freak, Hopper!" he yelled, running to the nurse's office. Jane was unbothered. She was actually sort of impressed that she didn't even get a nosebleed from that! Her powers were improving all the time, she thought.

"Holy shit!" Lucas exclaimed.

Will looking into his lunchbox trying not to laugh, while Max laughed out loud proudly.

"Damn Jane, I don't think he'll be bothering you at all anymore," Dustin said.

Mike slowly sat back down. He wasn't even sure what to think at that moment. Sure his girlfriend had totally defended him to some mouthbreather, but the guy had basically insulted Mike to Jane's face, which made him worried that she might realize how much of a loser he was and that she really *could* do better than him. It also worried Mike that Carter had called Jane a freak. Glancing at Will, Mike knew that nicknames popular people gave outcasts really stuck around. Jane could read all the hesitation on Mike's face and grabbed his hand reassuringly.

"As if we didn't already know, the whole school just found out how much of a badass my little brother's girlfriend is," Nancy said, coming up to their table with Jonathon.

"Do you think anyone noticed?" Jane asked, the adrenaline wearing off as she started to worry.

"No way, I wouldn't have even known if I didn't know you! Everyone's just gonna think you have a lead arm or something!" Jonathon told her.

"Seriously though, so badass!" Nancy said again. Jane smiled as the pair walked away.

Billy Hargrove was in Ally Yarder's basement smoking a cigarette as he put his clothes back on and was heading out from his 'date'.

"You leaving so soon?" Ally said from the couch wearing only a sheet.

"Uh yeah. You're a bit of a bitch and I've gotten everything I came here for, so there's really no point in staying," he told her, loving the way her face fell at his insult. "See you, Al."

Soon Billy was driving home, flying through the streets of Hawkins. When he reached his house, he was surprised to find a car he didn't recognize in the driveway. When he walked inside, there was a strange man talking to his dad and Susan. All three of them looked up as Billy entered the room, but his step mother's face caught his attention. She looked scared and relieved at the same time.

"This must be your son, Billy," the unknown man said, looking at his notes. Neil nodded robotically.

"What the hell is this?" Billy asked.

"My name's Ed, I'm here to check out your house and make sure everything is running smoothly and safely around here," the man explained. Ed shook Billy's hand while Billy's blood went cold as he realized what was going on. He looked at his dad. Sure, he hated Susan and Max, but the possibility of seeing his dad get busted for being the abusive piece of shit he was, was alluring. With a smile he tried to hide, Billy sat down with them. *This was going to be good.*

10. Chapter 10

I hope you enjoy and don't forget to review!

Lucas walked Max home from school before heading to his own house to do some homework. Max walked into her front door. Her mom was waiting on the couch for her, which was extremely unusual since her mom usually worked late into the evening.

"Maxine, I'm glad you're home!" Susan exclaimed. Max was weary of her mother at this moment because she was acting... off.

"Uh hi Mom," Max replied.

"Come here honey," Susan said, leading Max to her own bedroom. Max followed, now totally weirded out. They sat on Max's bed together with the door shut.

"Sweetheart, Child Services are investigating Neil." She took a deep breath. "Now, I know that you were worried about me this weekend and I should have listened to you, but you've got to understand. Neil would never hurt you or me, so there's nothing to worry about," Susan said calmly.

"He did hurt you Mom, are you that thick that you don't even realize that?" Max shot at her.

"Honey, I know he has a temper, but they're not going to find anything to investigate!" Susan told her daughter. Max looked down and wondered, *there wouldn't be anything to investigate... unless we had a witness*. Max glanced at the door to her room, wondering what Billy was up to in the room next door...

Jane met Mike at her locker after last period, just like every other day. But today was slightly different. Since Jane was basically living at the Byers now that she had to look out for Will, Jane had asked Joyce if it would be okay for her and Mike to hang out at the Wheeler's until Joyce got off of work and picked them up. Being the

kindhearted person she is, she had agreed. Mike beamed at Jane as she approached him.

"You ready to hang out today?" he asked her with excitement.

"I can't wait, Mike," she replied, her eyes glistening. They both looked into each other's eyes with the most adorable passion.

"FREAK!" someone from behind them muttered. Jane's head snapped around to look for the source of the noise, but in the crowded hallway, it would be impossible to tell.

"Don't worry about them," Mike said, taking her hand as they walked out of the school together. "They have no idea how amazing you are." Jane grinned from ear to ear.

Once they reached Mike's basement, the pair were quickly snuggling on the couch, 'freak' soon forgotten. Jane had her head resting on Mike's lap while he played with her hair. She loved looking up at him like this. His eyes seemed to be endlessly deep and she enjoyed searching their darkness.

Mike looked down at Jane, his hands playing in her chocolate curls. He remembered the first time he had seen her with hair. Mike's heart had been pounding with anticipation as he saw the chain lock on the Byers' front door begin to slide down. The whole room had assumed it was a Demogorgon, but boy were they surprised when they saw white converse high tops enter the room. Mike's heart had literally dropped when he realized who it was. She looked very different from the last time Mike had seen her, but she still looked like *her*. She had an air of strength around her, and that seemed to have grown over the last 353 days, but she also had a vulnerability that Mike had really connected with. He saw her face transition to her softer self when they met eyes, and Mike knew he had never felt more whole in his entire life.

"What are you thinking about?" Jane murmured softly, cutting into Mike's thoughts.

"You," he replied without hesitation. Jane sat up and looked him in the eye, moving closer to him slowly. Soon their faces were only

inches apart. Mike's heart began to race, knowing where this was headed. Jane smashed her face against Mike's, moving onto his lap. Mike was at first shocked, but he quickly embraced her and began moving his mouth against hers. The voice in the back of Mike's mind told him that this was escalating too fast, but Mike ignored it, enjoying the electricity he felt kissing her so passionately.

"Mike," Jane muttered into his lips.

"Yes?" he breathed.

"I love the intense," she said with a laugh. Mike pulled away, his hands remaining in her hair and looked at her.

"I love you," Mike said. He knew he should feel nervous about the fact that he had just spilled that on her, but nothing had ever felt more right to him. Jane's breath hitched.

"I love you too."

Will was at his dining room table finishing up his homework. Jonathon and Nancy had driven him home from school and they were sitting on the couch in the living room watching some girly TV show that Will knew Jonathon would never choose to put on. Will laughed to himself, wondering when Jonathon had fallen in love so deeply with Nancy that he didn't mind watching dumb TV, as long as it was with her. Will continued on his homework. Today hadn't been bad at all. Will was feeling especially well rested thanks to Jane. Will really owed Jane his life several times over and he would never be able to show how grateful he was to her.

It was Monday, so Steve Harrington was on his way to the Henderson's for his usual Monday night dinner. Dustin enjoyed having Steve around, and Steve enjoyed having someone who was fun and carefree to hang out with, plus free food was always nice when you had just moved out of your parent's house.

"Dusty! Steve's here!" Ms. Henderson called, grabbing her casserole from the oven.

"Coming!" Dustin replied, emerging from his room. He swung the front door open and gave his signature goofy smile. "Steve! How's it going?"

"Good, good! Smells great in here, Ms. H," Steve said, taking off his shoes at the door.

"Well it's done, so take a seat," Ms. Henderson told the boys. They sat down for dinner, which was a mixture of Steve charming Dustin's mom, Dustin going on about some scientific concept the neither Steve nor Ms. Henderson understood, or Ms. Henderson talking about her new cat, Tews.

"What do you we should do about Will?" Steve asked Dustin when they had finished up eating and had sat down in the living room. Dustin's mom was cleaning up the dishes so they wouldn't be overheard.

"Jane thinks she can kill it, and I totally trust her judgement on that, but I mean it seems like a big risk. We really need to understand what the shadow monster really is and why it's targeting Will," Dustin brainstormed.

"The Chief is never going to agree to put Jane up against that thing. We saw what happened after she closed the gate," Steve said.

Hopper had returned from the lab holding Jane in his arms as she was completely passed out. She had dried blood coming from her nose, eyes, and even ears. It was frightening. They had put her in Joyce's bed and washed her face off before letting her sleep. Mike had sat next to her the whole time she slept, with Hopper periodically coming in and seeing how she was doing. She didn't wake up for fourteen hours, and when she did she could barely speak. Her voice was so drained. Jane had complained of feeling sore for almost three whole days and didn't use her powers for about a week after that. She had been so worn out, it was nerve racking. The thought of her actually facing that thing was scary. Dustin wasn't sure she could do it without being taken to the upside down like she was with the Demogorgon. Both boys sighed, trying to figure out what they could do.

Max knocked on Billy's bedroom door. She wasn't even sure he would be able to hear her knock over his blasting music, but he swung the door open after a few moments. Billy looked surprised to see her standing there.

"What do you want, shitbird?" he growled.

"Billy, I think we might be of use to each other here, but you'll have to hear me out." After a short contemplation, her step brother moved out of the door way for her. Once she stepped in, he closed the door.

"You have five minutes. Go," Billy said, crossing his arms.

"Okay so you know how your dad's being investigated? I don't think they'll find any evidence of how much of a dick he is, but maybe if there was a convincing story of abuse, it would be enough to make a case. So I guess I was wondering... What exactly has your dad done to you?"

11. Chapter 11

This chapter is kinda fluffy while I figure out what my plan is for the plot! As always, thanks for reading and leave me review so I know how I'm doing!

Jane was in Mike's basement, they were sitting at the table now, since Mike said 'the intense' was getting *too intense*. Jane didn't really get what he meant by that, but after seeing how red Mike's face was, she sort of got the memo. So, they got started on their homework. Jane needed a little help here and there, but Mike was impressed by how much she could do without help. It made Mike's heart swell with pride seeing Jane do so well in school.

"Mike?" Jane said softly.

"Yeah?" Mike replied, turning to face her.

"If I tell you a secret, will you promise not to tell anyone?" she asked.

"Of course! I promise," Mike said, glad that she felt she could open up to him.

"Last year, when I went to see Mama, I also did something else. I met Sister," Jane told him. Mike's eyebrows knitted together, not knowing what that meant.

"Like, your mom had another daughter?"

"No." Jane pulled her bracelet up to show her tattoo. "Sister. Eight," Jane explained. Mike's eyes widened in realization. Another kid from the lab, one before her. That made much more sense. Mike wondered why she hadn't told someone sooner.

"Okay, so what happened, with your sister?" Mike prodded.

"She lived in Chicago, I found her. She had friends that helped her. Her powers were different from mine, she could make people see things, whatever she wanted... They went after bad men," Jane said, not meeting his eyes.

"So, did you go after the bad men too?" Mike asked.

"Yes, but I didn't kill him," Jane looked down, ashamed. Mike couldn't stand to see her feeling like that.

"Jane, it's okay! Everybody makes mistakes, don't beat yourself up about it. I'm just glad you told me," Mike said, putting his arm around her shoulders.

"The reason I told you is because... she helped me with my powers when I was with her. She helped me to get stronger. I think maybe... maybe she could help me kill the Mindflayer."

Hopper sat in his office. He was feeling incredibly stressed out over this whole upside down situation. He wished there was a way for Will to stay safe and to permanently recover from the time he spent over there, but that didn't seem possible. Hopper got up, grabbing his coat and headed out of the station, ignoring when his deputies complained that he was always leaving. He got in his car and headed to Dr. Owens's clinic. Since the lab was closed, Owens was the only person from the lab that had stuck around and became a real doctor. Will still had weekly visits to his office, just to make sure that he was physically fine, but the rest of it was out of his, or anyone's, repertoire.

"Jim! It's nice to see you," Sam Owens said, coming into the waiting room to take him back into his office. "What's this surprise visit about?"

"Doc, do you think it's possible for there to be a gate inside of someone? Like Will Byers?" Hopper asked. Owens looked at him quizzically, thinking it through.

"I mean, in this situation, I think anything's possible. Admittedly, there's still not a lot we know about the 'upside down' as you call it."

Hopper sat, thinking his words over. Jane seemed to be the only person who had a solid answer for their predicament, but Hopper did not want to risk Jane facing that monster again. He sighed, and continued thinking.

Max walked into her own bedroom, shaken up at what Billy had told her. Max still hated Billy of course, but a small part of her sympathized with him after hearing his story.

"The worst thing he's ever done is stick my hand on a hot burner when I didn't behave," Billy had told Max. "I was ten." Billy had continued on about other incidents throughout his childhood. Max really couldn't believe some of the ways Neil had been punishing Billy all his life. Billy had tried to play it cool the whole conversation, but she could see the cracks in his façade. Billy was still a total psychopath, but at least now Max understood why. After talking, the step siblings seemed to have some kind of alliance now, as unlikely as that seemed. They both wanted Neil out of their lives.

Jane pulled the blindfold off of her eyes and looked back at Mike.

"Well, did you see her?" Mike asked.

"Yes. Manhattan," Jane explained. Kali and her gang must have started fresh in Manhattan after they had almost been caught last year. Jane felt immense guilt over leaving her sister, but she knew it was what was best. Jane had to protect her friends and her home.

"Do you think we should try and contact her?" Mike wondered.

"Not yet," Jane replied. Mike still wasn't used to the fact that Jane could nonchalantly find anyone with her mind. She was getting so good at it, she didn't need a photograph if she knew the person, and she didn't need a radio or a TV now either. Mike wondered if she had ever looked for him since they had been reunited. He knew she had been watching him the whole time they were apart, but he wondered if she still did it now.

Jane looked at Mike and noticed his cheeks were turning pink. She poked him in the cheek and watched his face light up at her touch. His smile melted her, and soon they were kissing again. They seemed to be doing a lot of that now. Nancy had told Jane it was 'hormones', whatever that was. Jane just knew she loved it. She loved kissing Mike and she loved the fact that it made her feel warm from her head

to her toes.

Will was drawing with his new set of colored pencils when he heard his front door open. In walked his mom and Jane, who he noticed was looking incredibly glowy today.

"Hey, Will! How was school today? Were you feeling alright?" Joyce asked, grinning at her son.

"Yeah Mom, it was fine! I've been sleeping very well recently," Will noted, glancing at Jane who smiled.

"Whatcha watching?" Joyce asked Jonathon and Nancy, who were still stationed on the couch.

"I don't know, Nancy what is it that we're watching?" Jonathon replied, slightly cheekily. It made Joyce happy to see her son being sarcastic with such a nice girl like Nancy.

"It's 'Absence of Malice' Mrs. Byers," Nancy said sweetly, elbowing Jonathon. Will and Jane couldn't help but laugh. "Actually, it's getting late, I'd better head home. I told my mom I'd be back for dinner," Nancy said, standing.

"Oh alright honey, I'll see you soon!" Joyce told her nicely.

"I'll walk you out," Jonathon suggested.

On the front porch of the Byers house, Nancy and Jonathon had their first alone time of the day. Nancy loved hanging out with Will, but sometimes you just needed some time to kiss your boyfriend. And she did. Jonathon's kiss lingered on her lips the whole way home.

Karen Wheeler was taking lasagna out of the oven when Nancy came in the door.

"Hi sweetie, how was school?" her mother asked Nancy.

"It was fine, Mom."

"Good! Well, dinner's almost ready, so go tell Mike it's time to get up

here," Karen instructed.

Nancy trudged downstairs.

"Mike? Dinner!" Nancy said, before heading back up.

"Coming!"

12. Chapter 12

Thank you guys for all the support on this story! Don't forget to review and let me know what you think of it!

Jane and Will were in their pajamas, teeth brushed, and ready for bed. They got into Will's bed and Jane held Will's hand, as she had all weekend. Joyce came in and tucked them both in with a kiss on the forehead.

"Will," Jane said once they were alone in the dark.

"Yeah?"

"How much longer do you think we can keep doing this?" she asked.

"I don't know. I guess until you're ready to get rid of him for good," Will replied. Jane nodded in the dark.

Jane thought it over. She knew she had pushed the Mindflyer back last year. She had looked the thing in the face through the gate and felt its forces push against hers. It was strong, but not as strong as her. But things were different now. Jane wasn't as angry. In fact, she was happy with her life. The anger she had drew from that helped her close the gate wasn't as easy to access anymore. She needed her sister to help her get stronger. Jane just wasn't sure when that was going to be possible. Suddenly, a thought hit her.

Mike sat in his bed, his thoughts lingering on Jane. She was so incredible, he couldn't keep his mind off of hers. It was like he was drawn to her by an invisible string. He rubbed his eyes and tried to get some sleep. Soon, Mike Wheeler was dreaming, but his thoughts remained on his favorite girl. The two of them were on a beach and it was summer. They were alone, which I guess was Mike's wishful thinking. They were just splashing around in the water and hanging out, but the dream gave Mike butterflies.

"Mike?" he heard Jane whisper. He looked at her in his dream, but

she made no indication that she had said anything. "Mike?" he heard again. Now he was looking around, unsure of what was going on. Suddenly, Mike's dream melted away like smoke. He woke suddenly, covered in sweat.

"Jane?" Mike whispered into the empty room. There was no reply. Then, Mike heard radio static. He turned the lamp on next to his bed and picked up the radio. "Jane?" he called into.

"Mike," he heard Jane reply.

"What is it?" Mike asked eagerly. She had never done this before, and that made him nervous as to why she was doing it now.

"Meet me behind the school before first period. There's something we need to do."

Max and Billy had waited until they were sure their parents were asleep before they stepped out onto the porch and made a phone call.

"Hello, I'm Maxine Mayfield. Sorry to call so late, but we have an eye witness report of Neil Hargrove's abuse. Yes, Bill Hargrove. Uh huh. Thank you, we can come in tomorrow," Max spoke into the phone. Billy looked at her, not sure what to think. Sure, this would take his dick of a dad out of his life, but was living with Susan and Max any better? Of course, Billy was eighteen, so he could take off on his own. Digging a bit deeper, Billy realized that he really didn't care about much, but seeing his dad being humiliated like he had made Billy feel his entire life seemed like something he should care about. And that anger, that hollowness that had consumed Billy at such a young age as a result of that humiliation, had left a shell of a human being. Billy Hargrove didn't have anything in him except his vital organs. A fate which should not be replicated.

Hopper was in the Byers living room, setting up the blanket and pillow that Joyce had provided for him while he and Jane stayed there to use. He made a bed for himself on the couch and tried to get comfortable. Hopper was trying not to think about the fact that the only reason he was spending the night at Joyce Byers was because of

some weird psychic link between their children. Hopper and Joyce only seemed to get this close when there was some crisis situation. It only confirmed Hopper's suspicions that his feelings towards her were not reciprocated.

"Hop?" a woman's voice whispered. He looked up and saw Joyce standing near the hallway. "I didn't wake you up did I?"

"No, of course not," Hopper said quickly, sitting up.

"I couldn't sleep. I was just seeing if anyone else was awake."

"The kids are asleep?" Hopper asked.

"Yeah... Very soundly, I might add. Will's been sleeping so well thanks to her," Joyce told him with a slight smile. She would forever be grateful for Jane for keeping her son safe.

"Hey," Hopper said, making Joyce look at him. "Where gonna fix this, okay? I'm talking with Dr. Owens to find some solution. It might take a little while, but we're going to make sure Will won't be connected to that place anymore. You got it?" Hop said in a way that made Joyce's worries melt away, if only for a moment. She really had never had a better friend than him.

Mike stepped out of his mother's car, giving her a wave, before heading to the back of the school instead of inside. Mike really hoped he hadn't imagined Jane calling him last night and that he wasn't just standing out here missing first period for no reason. Soon, he saw the familiar Converse high tops heading his way and he felt a wave of relief.

"Thank you. For meeting me," Jane said, grabbing his skinny hands in hers.

"Anytime! I love being with you. What's this about?" Mike asked.

"We're going to talk to my sister. Maybe I can get her to help us," Jane explained.

"Isn't she in New York though? We don't have driver's licenses, how

are we supposed to talk to her?" Mike wondered, always thinking of everything logically. Jane rolled her eyes at him with a smile.

"I don't need to go there to talk to her," Jane reminded him. "I was practicing on you last night, and you're here now. So, it must have worked. We need to go somewhere private and quiet so that I can reach her." Mike pondered that for a moment before a thought hit him.

"Okay, follow me."

Once again, Jane was riding on the back of Mike's bike. She loved this feeling. He was so close to her that they practically felt like they were halves of the same whole. The thought comforted her. Jane's stomach had felt very anxious when she thought of seeing Kali again. Jane had abandoned her, something that she had only told Mike about, and even then Jane had given him the very abbreviated version.

"Remember this?" Mike asked, as they pulled up to the old junkyard where she had thrown Lucas two years earlier. Jane nodded as she got off of his bike. They went and sat inside the bus and Mike just watched as Jane closed her eyes and searched in her mind for her sister.

Jane was standing in the blackness. With a quick look around, she could see a figure in the distance. Hesitantly, she moved towards it. As she got closer, Jane realized that it was in fact Kali. She was sitting at the head of a table with a map in front of her. There were X's all over it.

"Dr. Brunner has to be somewhere nearby. Unless the last guy we killed lied to us," Kali said, presumably to her friends who Jane could not see. Jane stiffened at the mention of Papa, but continued closer to Kali.

"Sister?" Jane called into the blackness. Kali seemed oblivious. With more force, she tried again. "Sister?" Kali's eyes met hers. The older girl cocked her head to the side, as if she was trying to hear better. Jane tried harder. "Sister? It's Jane. I need your help," Jane called

out. Kali's eyes widened.

"Sister?" Kali uttered.

13. Chapter 13

Thank you guys for getting so hyped from the last chapter! Don't forget to review and let me know what you think! (also I don't really know how child services worked in the 80's so I'm just guessing here)

Mike was riding back to the high school with Jane holding onto him so tightly he could barely breathe. The pair made it back right before lunch, so they waited outside the building until they would hear the bell. Mike hadn't asked questions when Jane had opened her eyes, which were drowning in tears, her nose bleeding. He simply held her in his arms while she cried. Even now, they were sitting outside with their backs against the brick building, Jane hadn't said a word of what had happened between her and her sister.

"It's okay," Mike said, grabbing Jane's hand reassuringly. "You can tell me whenever you want to, alright?"

Jane nodded in response. When she had began talking to her sister, Kali had agreed to help her with the Mindflyer. But Kali also wanted a favor from Jane. Kali wanted Jane to find Dr. Brenner. And to kill him.

Lucas was at the lunch table with Max, Dustin and Will. They had all decided that Jane and Mike had skipped, which was very unlike them. No one had seen either of them all day, but Dustin kept making jokes that they had run off to make out. Will laughed nervously, sure that this had something to do with Jane's plan. He just hoped whatever it was had worked.

"Well, speak of the devil," Max said, as the party turned to see Mike and Jane coming to the table, hand in hand.

"Where were you guys?" Lucas asked.

"I already told you, they were making out!" Dustin joked. Will elbowed him, gesturing to Jane, who everyone could tell had been

crying. Her eyes were puffy and red, while Mike just held a pained expression as they sat down.

"You guys hungry?" Will asked, trying to break the tension.

"No, Jane said, leaning onto Mike's shoulder.

"Me neither," Mike agreed. After feeling out the vibe that those two were not going to share about their little field trip today, Max started a new conversation.

"Me and Billy ratted on Neil last night." Max gave a little smile as Lucas grabbed her hand under the table.

"How'd that go?" Lucas questioned.

"Well, we're going to that guy's office when I'm out of school to make a statement, and hopefully it'll be strong enough to press charges," Max explained, with a shrug.

"I hope it works. That son of a bitch deserves it," Lucas said coldly.

Jane was half listening to the lunch table conversation, but the other half of her was in her own head, scared out of her mind worrying about finding Papa and what she would do once she found him.

Once the lunch bell had rung, Mike and Jane walked together to their lockers and were on their way to art class. Art was in the far end of the building, which was fairly secluded besides the main hallway that led there. That's where Carter Tims was standing, waiting for them.

"Hey freak!" Carter called, drawing their attention. He saw Jane's sad looking face and said, "Did Frog-face break up with you so soon? Did he figure out how much of a freak you are?" Carter continued, holding up his bandaged hand from when she had broken his fingers.

"Go away, we're not in the mood," Mike told him.

"What? Trouble in paradise or something?" Carter said, moving very close to Mike. Jane did not like that.

"Go. Away," Jane's quiet voice demanded, causing Carter to draw his

attention to her. Carter took a step closer to her and Mike tried to push her behind him, but she would not be moved. "Do you remember what happened the last time you didn't listen to me?" Jane asked Carter cryptically. They saw Carter's face flash to fear very quickly before it reverted back to his normal cocky expression.

"Yeah, freak I do! You somehow smashed my hand up with some weird karate or something! You don't scare me!"

Carter suddenly found himself walking backwards. He wasn't moving his feet though, it was like they were being controlled. "Wha- what are you doing? How are you doing this?" Carter looked terrified.

"I said go away. Next time... listen." Jane said, lifting her head back up from its tilted position.

Mike's eyes were wide in a mixture of admiration and fear, something he felt a lot around Jane. She was extraordinary. They walked off to art class, leaving one very freaked out jock in the hallway, who ran out of the school like a bat out of hell.

Hopper was sitting in his office, going over some cases when Flo walked in, silently throwing a notepad his way before walking out. The notes read:

'Call from the high school, Jane skipped first through third period'

'Call from Mrs. Tims, Carter says your daughter is a witch'

Hopper looked at those two messages and pinched the bridge of his nose. *I'm gonna kill that girl.*

Billy was in the high school parking lot smoking a cigarette when Max rode up on her skateboard after school. She got in silently and they rode to Mr. Richard's office. Neither of them spoke to the other, each feeling equally weird about this whole situation. When they reached the office, there was a secretary, who Billy flirted with the whole time, until Mr. Richards came out and showed them to his private office.

"Okay, Bill. Start at the beginning here. What are all the incident's that demonstrate your father's abuse? Take as much time as you need," Ed said, pulling out a pen and paper to write them all out. Billy glanced and Max who was in the chair next to him.

"I can't do it with her in the room," Billy decided. Ed looked at Max, who stood.

"Fine. I guess I'll be outside," Max said, sitting in the lobby with the secretary. Max wondered why Billy didn't want her to be there. *I guess he might be embarrassed or something.* Or he doesn't want Max to know about his weaknesses. After almost forty minutes, Billy and Ed came out of the office.

"Well, good news kids! I'm going to take this down to the station and you'll have yourself a case," Ed explained.

"Thank you," Max said as she and Billy left the building. Billy still wasn't meeting her gaze. They drove home silently and never said a word to each other the rest of the day.

Hopper stopped by the store to see Joyce.

"I'm going to kill her! It's only the second week of school and she's already misbehaving! *I can't believe her!* I made myself *clear* that she could not use her abilities at school, and she disobeys me!" Hopper ranted.

"She's just a kid, Hop. I know it's frustrating, but being mad won't help either of you," Joyce chimed in calmly.

"I know, but it's so... so *frustrating!*" Joyce laughed at him.

"It's called being a parent. Get used to it," she told him.

Jane was in the Wheeler's basement again today, but with Will and Mike there too. They were doing their homework in silence until Will finally spoke up.

"So what actually happened today? Was it part of you plan Jane?"

Will asked.

"Yes," she finally spoke up. Mike gave Will a look saying, *I don't know what happened either.*

"How did it go?" Will asked, trying to keep his questions light.

"Sister will help me," Jane explained, not meeting their eyes.

"Jane met a sister from the lab. Number 008," Mike explained to a very confused Will. The youngest Byers tried to wipe the very shocked expression off of his face.

"Oh... Can she help you kill it?" Will pressed.

"Yes, it's a deal."

"What kind of deal?" Mike wondered. He knew whatever it was had made her cry for over twenty minutes.

"She needs me to do something for her. She wants me to kill Papa." Mike and Will's jaws about dropped to the floor.

"Dr. Brenner? I thought he was dead," Mike finally said.

"No. Alive. And I'm going to find him."

14. Chapter 14

I'm trying to set up the conflict I have in mind for the main plot point, so sorry if these last couple chapters are sort of filler. Anyways, I hope you enjoy and don't forget to review!

Kali had been planning her biggest kill. After finding out Dr. Brenner had been alive this entire time, she had been tracking people down trying to get information on him. She was getting close. She knew he was somewhere East, most likely a big city, but she wasn't sure where. She was going over the maps obsessively, trying to understand. That's when she heard it. The faintest whisper that seemed to be coming from inside of her own head.

"Sister?" it said. Kali suddenly started to see something. It was blurry so she kept focusing on it.

"Sister! It's Jane. I need your help." Kali could suddenly see Jane in a blackness that could only exist in her mind.

"Jane! What are you doing here?" Kali asked, perplexed. The older girl still felt the pangs of betrayal from Jane, even now. It had made her grow more bitter.

"I need your help! You have to make me stronger so I can fight it. It's too strong for me," Jane rambled. Kali looked at the desperation in her eyes and got an incredible idea.

"I can help you, sister. But," she paused, "You'll have to promise to help me too, deal?" Kali offered.

"Anything."

"Locate the man who calls himself our father. Then, we are going to kill him," Kali told her. She could see the fear in Jane's eyes but it melted into determination.

"Deal. I'm in Hawkins, Indiana. Find me and help me, then I'll do it."

Kali was suddenly back in her work room, her friends shaking her

awake and her nose dripping blood.

Will and Mike were speechless after hearing of the deal Jane had made with her sister.

"Is that safe? To go after him? What if he captures you and takes you back to a lab?" Mike questioned.

"I will kill him," Jane said without hesitation.

"What are you going to tell Hopper when some girl arrives to help you kill the Mindflayer?" Will asked.

"I'll tell him before she's here," Jane said with a shrug.

Mike and Will exchanged a look, but reluctantly went back to doing their homework.

Lucas was in his bedroom with Max. He really couldn't even believe his mom had allowed it, even though the door remained open.

"You're fifteen, Lucas. I trust you," his mom had told him. The fact the Mrs. Sinclair was also totally nuts over his girlfriend helped. "Such a nice, strong girl," she would say about Max. Lucas was watching Max as she did homework on his bed, while he sat at his desk. Her black eye was nearly healed, it just looked like she had one eye bag that was darker than the other. Max looked up, catching him staring.

"You watching me, Stalker?" Max teased, smiling.

"What? No! Of course not!" Lucas deflected. Max got up and gave Lucas a light kiss, effectively shutting him up.

"That's what I thought," Max said triumphantly, sitting back down on his bed.

"You're both nerds," Erica said from the hallway.

"Stay out of my room!" Lucas yelled to his sassy little sister, who stuck out her tongue and ran down the stairs.

Hopper himself came to pick up Jane and Will from the Wheeler's on his way home from work. They got inside the car and sped off. Hopper wasn't sure how to bring up the incidents of the day to Jane without getting upset, so he drove the kids in silence, waiting to be with Joyce when he confronted her. Joyce knew exactly how to say things without shouting and opening up a black-hole. It was something Jim admired her for.

When he pulled into the gravel driveway, all three of them trudged into the Byers house. Inside, Hopper grabbed Jane's hand.

"We need to talk," he told her. Hopper pulled his daughter into the kitchen, where Joyce was cooking dinner. "What was the one rule I gave you when you started school?" Hopper questioned.

"Don't use your powers at school," Jane recited, knowing exactly what this conversation was going to be about.

"And what did you do today?" Hopper asked again, this time clearly agitated.

"I used my powers," Jane admitted calmly.

"Do you realize how much danger you put yourself in?! I don't even care why you skipped the first half of your day! What if that kid tells people and those monsters from the lab find you?! Then what?" Hopper yelled.

"Hop," Joyce reprimanded, put her hand on his arm. He nodded at her and calmed down a bit.

"I'm just trying to keep you safe, alright kid?" Hopper tried again.

"I know. I'm sorry. It won't happen again," Jane said coolly before walking off. Hopper just shook his head. Jane sat down on Will's bed, thinking of what Kali had said last year. She had told Jane that they would try to keep her from using her gifts, that they would never understand her. Maybe she was right. *Hurry up, Sister*, Jane thought to herself.

Mike was up all night, worrying over what Jane had told him this afternoon. He really could not take losing Jane again. She meant the world to him. And although Mike had never met Kali, but he had a bad feeling about her. He understood her wanting to kill Dr. Brenner who had miraculously survived the Demogorgon two years ago, but revenge was definitely not the healthiest way to deal with trauma. It would only blow up in her face, and Mike was scared that she would drag Jane into that as well.

Will woke up in the middle of the night to get a glass of water. He'd had to pry his hand out of Jane's to get up, but he somehow had. He was sipping his water in the kitchen when he saw headlights in the window. Curiously, Will made his way to the living room window. He was shocked to see no other cars in the driveway besides Hopper's, Jonathon's, and his mothers. Will was a little confused since this was not the area where people pulled in someone's driveway to turn around. He lived on a dead end. Slightly freaked out, Will went back to his room and shook Jane awake.

"I think something weird is going on," Will whispered to her. Together, they crept back out into the living room. Jane peaked outside and her heart nearly dropped out of her chest when she saw a familiar van parked out front. Kali was standing outside of it, looking right at her, her nose dripping blood.

"See? No one's there. But I swear I saw headlights," Will said to Jane, truly seeing nothing outside.

"It's sister. She came." *I guess I didn't get a chance to tell my dad,* Jane thought to herself.

15. Chapter 15

Sorry for the lack of updates, the holidays hit me without warning! I hope you enjoy this chapter, I hope it doesn't seem too rushed. Anyway, please leave me a review so I know how I'm doing! They mean a lot to me. Enjoy!

Hopper was woken up from a somewhat pleasant dream as he was laying on Joyce's bedroom floor in a sleeping bag. Now the entire house was awake and huddled in the Byers living room. Kali and her strange friends were standing near the door and the Hawkins gang was standing on the opposite side of the room near the Television. It was possibly the most awkward situation Hopper had ever been in. The only thing that could make this worse was if that Henderson kid were here. Hop was trying not to be mad at Jane for excluding this part of her field trip last year until after this crisis was averted, but it was with great difficulty.

"So, let me get this straight," Joyce began, taking a long drag from her cigarette. "You and Jane met up last year before she came back to close the gate and you... taught her?" Jane had skipped a few major details, but Kali and Jane both nodded, knowing it was best to just go with it. "And you think you can help Jane get strong enough to help my boy?"

"Yes. Jane and I have very different abilities, but our power comes from our emotions and I was teaching her how to channel those emotions to become stronger," Kali explained.

"And was that why... why you were so strong that night? When you closed the gate?" Hopper asked Jane, being the only person to witness the raw strength of Jane's abilities. It had scared the shit out of him, but in a good way.

"Yes," Jane said. "The reason I called you here, Sister, is because my friend is in danger because of something I did. I opened a gate and I thought closing it would solve all our problems, but it didn't. The monster is still reaching Will, it's trying to use him while he sleeps because he has become a part of the gate," Jane told Kali. She looked

the younger girl up and down.

"Festering..." she muttered. "I think I may be able to help more than you think," Kali stated.

"How?" Jonathon asked.

Jane and Kali shared a look of understanding before Kali answered.

"We need the bath."

So there they were. It was close to midnight on a Tuesday. *Why did this have to happen on a weekday?* Will thought. The Byers had an old kitty pool that they filled with water in the middle of the living room and they were pouring in salt that was normally reserved for icy winters. Jonathon made some blindfolds out of old towels and handed them to Kali and Jane. Kali's friends were still lingering, making jokes and creeping the others out, but not exactly contributing in any helpful way.

"Jane, when we go into the boy's head, you'll have to listen to me very carefully, do you understand?" Kali whispered to her.

"Yes," Jane replied.

"Interesting that you keep secrets from your policeman..." Kali said tauntingly, making Jane feel incredibly guilty.

Will noticed this exchange but chose to say nothing for the time being.

The girls and were laying in the tub with Will, each holding one of his hands. Jonathon watched anxiously as he saw blood starting to pool in both of the girl's right nostril. It didn't run since they were on their backs, be he could see it all the same and it meant one thing: *something was happening.*

Jane was in the blackness, but this time with Kali. They walked over to where they could see Will lying down. Jane looked to Kali for guidance, but in this moment, neither girl knew exactly where to

start. As if following some innate intuition, they crouched next to Will and closed their eyes. Jane felt the familiar feeling she had felt when she had come across the Demogorgon in this same place.

"Now, Jane. We're ready," Kali told her reassuringly. Jane took a deep breath before expanding a large crack from where Will was lying. She pulled the gate from Will and it seemed to climb up some invisible wall. She could see the goo between the opening and Jane hoped the gate was not opening in Mrs. Byers living room in her home dimension. It wouldn't matter soon enough, she reminded herself. Jane's nose was bleeding steadily now. Kali took her hand, and together they stepped through.

Mike had a pit in his stomach that would not seem to ease enough for him to fall asleep. Mike had had plenty of nights like this, but this particular night was giving him the heebie jeebies. He tried to roll over in an effort to find a sleeping position, but suddenly, Mike's lamp and overhead lights started blinking. Mike sat up suddenly, knowing better than to think this was just something electrical. He darted across the hallway to get Nancy.

Joyce was chain smoking, staring down at the three figures in the kitty pool they had set up in her living room. She pushed back a thought about how her house always seemed to get trashed somehow, knowing that she would move heaven and earth for Will and her living room was the least of her concerns. Jonathon grabbed her hand, and they shared a worried look.

"This is the upside down, as you call it?" Kali confirmed as they walked across the dark town. Jane nodded. They didn't know where the Mindflayer would be, so they were walking the main roads cautiously. Soon, the two heard thunder in the sky that was slowly turning red. They both knew it was near. Jane looked up and saw the familiar shadow. Kali looked at Jane in fear, but her face molded to stone quickly after. "Remember Jane. Use your anger."

Jane place one hand in front of her and thought of Papa, of the lab, of Mama, all of the awful things she had endured in her short life.

The shadow moved closer, but very hesitantly, as if already he was on the defensive.

"Good, Jane." Kali sounded a little winded, as if she was unsure of Jane's capability to kill this thing. "Pull on that emotion. Use it," she continued. Jane's nose was bleeding heavily out of both nostrils, and the shadow had not moved any closer yet. Kali sensed that this thing had gotten a taste of Jane's power already and was not eager to face her again. The storm in the sky started to dissipate slowly. Jane's hand was shaking. The monster started to move its tendrils towards them. Jane anticipated this and put her other hand up with a huff. The shadows seemed to hit some type of invisible wall and were not able to push any further. Letting loose a ghastly yell, Jane pushed even further. Kali was very impressed with the girl's sheer power that seemed to have this giant beast cowering before her. Jane was bleeding from her ears now, and her eyes had started to leak red as well. Kali looked frightened for the girl.

"Take my hand! Use me!" the older girl instructed. Jane grabbed one of Kali's hands in her own and instantly felt an increase in force. Jane pushed further than she ever had, trying to completely disintegrate this monster. She howled with might and Kali had to try not to act shocked when Jane's feet lifted off the ground. The power emanating off of this small girl was so strong that Kali even noticed pieces of the ground were floating around her feet as well. Kali stayed planted and she had to reach up to keep her hand in Jane's. Kali's nose was bleeding from both nostrils as she felt Jane pulling from her. "Finish it," Kali told Jane. The monster was starting to fade, its darkness being blown away. Soon, there was nothing left of it, and Jane crashed to the ground, only to be caught by Kali. That's when Jane, Kali, and Will both shot up from the bath and took off their blindfolds. It was dead.

Nancy wasn't even in park yet and Mike had jumped out of the car and ran up the Byers' porch. Nancy ran in after him. The Wheelers were only slightly surprised by what they found. There was that old pool the boys used to play in in the middle of the room. Hopper was rubbing Jane's hair as she rested on the couch. Will was sitting with Joyce and Jonathon on the other side of the couch; Will was still

conscious but looked a little worn out. Then there was a group of people Mike didn't know sitting around the dining room table, all hovering around a punk-looking girl was an intense nose bleed and tired eyes. Mike instantly put two and two together.

"Sister," he whispered to himself.

"What?" Nancy muttered.

"Nevermind," Mike said, rushing over to Hopper and Joyce. "They killed it, didn't they?" he questioned. The two of them nodded. "Is everyone okay?" Mike continued.

"I'm fine. I feel a lot... lighter. Just tired," Will said. Mike smiled, turning to look at Jane. She looked rough. Her hair was wet and she had the remains of blood on her face, even though it had probably been wiped away already, her face still had a tinge of pink streaks. The veins in her forehead looked more pronounced than he's ever seen them and she didn't look like she was awake.

"She's resting, but I think she'll be okay," Hopper said distantly, looking over at Kali.

"What happened?" Mike asked.

"Um, well... Jane's sister Kali helped her get into that... place and kill that *monster*," Joyce said coldly.

"I'm glad you're okay, Will," Nancy said, moving over to put a hand on Jonathon's shoulder. Mike nodded, glancing at Jane worriedly.

16. Chapter 16

I hope you guys enjoy this chapter. Trying to get back to normal for at least a little while! Leave me a review and enjoy reading!

"We'd better get back home before Mom and Dad freak. But I'll drop you off here in the morning instead of school," Nancy told her younger brother, who was on the verge of tears looking at Jane asleep on the couch. Mike looked at her with sad eyes, but nodded. On the car ride home, Mike was quiet. Nancy knew he was probably worried sick about Jane.

"She's a strong girl," Nancy told him. "I'm sure she'll be fine." Mike smiled at her, wiping a stray tear from his cheek.

"I know."

Jane woke up feeling incredibly groggy. She could see light streaming through blinds in an unfamiliar room. She tried to lift her head to get a better look at where she was, but she found it incredibly difficult. Her head felt like it weighed a thousand pounds and there was an insane amount of pressure behind her eyes.

"Hi sweetheart!" Joyce said as she noticed Jane stirring awake. Jane turned to look at Joyce and realized she must be in her bedroom. She tried to talk but her voice was too weak and nothing came out. "Let me get you some water, okay?" Joyce told Jane sweetly. Jane gave a weak smile as Joyce left the room. That woman really had a heart of gold. Jane looked over and saw that it was 2:12 pm. She sighed, knowing that she had gotten a ton of sleep and still felt this awful.

"Jane?" Mike's voice caught her attention as he poked his head into the door. He and Will walked in and kneeled next to her on the bed.

"Mike," Jane croaked out. The Wheeler boy broke out into a grin. Then, Joyce returned with a glass of water. She lifted Jane's head and tipped the glass so Jane could drink. The water made her throat feel much better. Joyce stayed by Jane's head, running her hands through

her hair soothingly.

"Your dad really wanted to stay, but he had to go to work. Mike and Will stayed home from school to be here for you," Joyce told Jane, her eyes twinkling.

"Nancy covered for me with my parents, it was super cool," Mike joked, but his voice revealed how relieved Mike was that Jane was okay.

"Thank you for saving me... again," Will said to Jane with his soft voice. He cracked a smile. "I feel so much more like me now," Will explained. This made Jane feel much better.

"Sister?" Jane managed to whisper, wondering what happened when after the bath. The others shared a glance before Joyce spoke up.

"Kali and her friends left. I think they're staying the next town over. Kali wanted me to tell you that she'd see you soon. We tried to thank her, but she insisted the scales were even," Joyce spoke, sounding like she felt a little uneasy about the whole thing. Jane looked at Mike, knowing he would understand why Kali had stayed local. She was waiting for her.

Max was skating home from school with Lucas riding alongside her, unsure of what state her house would be in currently. Neil had been kicked out by her mother in tandem with the State. Billy was still living with them for the time being, but Max assumed he would leave after this all blew over. Lucas was hoping that with all the drama going on with his dad, Billy would decide not to commit a hate crime against him. A boy can dream, can't he? When they reached Max's house, both of them let out a sigh of relief that Billy's car was out of sight.

"Mom? I'm home and I brought my boyfriend," Max said bluntly. Lucas grinned for ear to ear hearing Max say that. He had never met Max's mom since her house was basically off limits for them considering her psycho step family. A woman with familiar red hair rounded the corner.

"You must be Lucas," the woman said warmly, but she looked like she had just finished crying. Lucas shook Susan's hand.

"Nice to meet you," he said pleasantly.

"Come on," Max demanded, dragging Lucas by his shirt sleeve to her bedroom. When they were in the privacy of her bedroom, Max pulled Lucas in for a lingering kiss. When they broke apart, Lucas put his hands on either side of her face.

"You're a pretty good kisser, Madmax."

"You not too bad yourself, Stalker."

Steve had gotten filled in at the station that day in Hopper's office. Paranoid as ever, Hopper had told the story in code-words, gestures, and some Morse code thrown in. Steve really hoped this would solve their upside down problem permanently. Just wishful thinking, he guessed. Steve was glad that Will was finally recovered from his disappearance two years ago, but he worried about how Jane was doing. Joyce had stayed home from work to watch her, but Hopper was still worried sick. The Chief clocked out of the station early to make sure she was alright.

Jane was on the Byers couch wrapped in a blanket with a pillow behind her pounding head. Mike sat next to her and occasionally rubbed her neck when she asked. Will was sitting on the other side of her, manning the Television with Jane's favorite soap operas so she was never too bored.

"Who wants chicken noodle soup?" Joyce called from the kitchen. Will hopped up to go see if she needed help.

"When?" Mike asked simply when he and Jane were alone. She looked at him and shrugged with little effort. "You need time to heal. And what are you going to tell Hopper when you leave?" Again, Jane had no answers.

Mike gave Jane a small smile that didn't meet his eyes. She should

never have agreed to kill Brenner with Kali. She shouldn't have to do everything for everyone else. It wasn't right. Mike made a promise to himself that Jane would never face anything without him ever again.

Hopper walking into the Byers house to see Jane on the couch slowing eating soup with weak, shaky hands. Mike was next to her on the floor with Will, also eating. Joyce sat next to Jane, rubbing calming 'mom' massages on her back.

"You feeling better, kid?" Hopper asked, hanging up his hat.

"Yes," Jane told him quietly. *Her voice sounds so tired*, he noticed. Joyce motioned for Hopper to come and take her seat.

"You want a bowl, Hop?" Joyce offered.

"I'd love one," he replied, sitting down. As he got so close to Jane, he noticed how she still looked pale and tired, but not half dead like she had last night. Hopper had stayed up almost the whole night watching her and making sure she was alright. He didn't think he could take losing another daughter, especially when the universe had gifted him with Jane following Sarah's death. A heart can only take so much. That was something he and Joyce had in common; they would do anything for their kids.

Kali sat in a motel room with Axel, Mick, Dottie, and Funshine. She still felt really tired, but her mind was still racing and plotting. The others were aruging over television stations or poker hands. Kali tuned them out. She was so close to finally ending Dr. Brenner. Ending the torment, the trauma, and the damage that still plagued would finally be free. All because of Jane.

17. Chapter 17

This is another fluffy, light chapter! Enjoy and don't forget to review! It really helps to keep me motivated to write! Thank you all for reading.

Mike woke up the next Monday morning, excited for the first time in almost a week. Jane would be back at school today. After Wednesday last week, Mike had gone to school without her and Mike was worried sick the whole time. He didn't want to be focusing on the Hundred Year's War, he wanted to be holding Jane's hand while she recovered. He also wanted to keep an eye on her. Now that Kali had made that deal, it was only a matter of time before she returned to ask Jane to go with her to complete her promise. Mike pushed those thoughts out of his mind as he got dressed for the day.

Jane woke up in her own bed since Will didn't need her protection anymore. It was her first day back to school today, which had pros and cons. Pros: gets to see Mike and their friends. Cons: everything else. Groaning, Jane got out of bed. Her muscles still felt somewhat like jelly, but Dr. Owens had given her a doctor's note to get out of P.E. for the week on account of the 'flu' she was supposedly recovering from. Hopper had just set down her usual plate of eggos when Jane sat down at their small kitchen table.

"Feeling better, kid?" he asked worriedly.

"Yeah. Just worn out," Jane commented with a shrug. Hopper nodded, taking that as a pretty good answer considering how bad she was last week. He was scared he really would lose her at some points.

"We ever gonna talk about this whole Chicago thing? And your sister?" Hopper questioned. When she didn't reply he tried again. "Look, I know you don't want to talk about it, but we need to be honest with each other. You didn't tell me last year, and I respect that, but we need to be able to trust each other. Just... tell me when you're ready. You promise?" Hopper exhaled. Knowing her childhood, he really did not want to push her, but she needed to start opening

up.

"Promise."

Will walked into the cafeteria at lunch and sat with Dustin who was the only other person to show up yet.

"How you feeling, Will?" Dustin said with his goofy grin.

"Good! I've really never felt better," Will replied.

"You seen Jane yet today?" Dustin asked. He was worried about her. The guys had been communicating the whole situation to each other all weekend on their walkies and it did not sound good. But at least she was at school today.

"I saw her in the hallway with Mike. She looked a little pale, but much better," Will told him. Dustin nodded contentedly. That's when Max walked up.

"This has been the best day of my life," she exclaimed uncharacteristically.

"Care to enlighten us?" Dustin sassed, gesturing to himself and Will. Max rolled her eyes, but continued grinning.

"Neil got charged with some kind of felony and is going to the big house for five years with no opportunity for parole for a year," Max said with luster. "My life just improved like... ten fold."

"Damn," Dustin said, raising his eyebrows.

"That's awesome, Max!" Will chimed in supportingly.

"Someone just dropped the big news, huh?" Lucas joked as he took the seat next to her. "She told me in second period," he explained. Max threw an elbow his way but never lowered her smile.

"Where're Mike and Jane?" Max wondered aloud, noticing that they were the only party members not present. Everyone gave a collective shrug.

"Maybe they wanted some alone time," Lucas suggested. Dustin rolled his eyes.

Mike and Jane sat behind the school. It was a little chilly, but Jane leaned on Mike's shoulder. Jane was trying not to show it, but Mike could tell she was still in pain. She would wince every so often when she moved and the tiredness of her eyes told him she still had a headache. Mike had coaxed her into eating most of her lunch, and now he was running his hands through her hair soothingly.

"You've got to promise me something Jane," Mike said.

"What?" Jane answered, curious.

"When Kali contacts you to find the Bad Man, you've got to tell me first." Jane looked up at him with her sparkling brown eyes. They looked so tired and too old for her beautiful face in this moment.

"You can't come with us," she said quietly.

"I'm never letting you do something like that alone again," Mike said with a fierceness that Jane had never heard from him.

"Mike..." she whispered.

"I'm going with you. I have to. I can't lose you again, remember? 353 days was hard enough. I don't think I could handle forever without you," Mike stated, tears forming in his eyes.

Jane was speechless. She did the only thing that felt right. Jane leaned in and smashed her mouth against his. They kissed intensely for a moment before she broke their kiss abruptly.

"Okay," she relented, to Mike's surprise, before putting her mouth back against his. This time he was better prepared and Mike put his hands on either side of her face, pulling her closer to him. She leaned her head into the kiss, grabbing his shirt collar.

"What's this?" a voice asked. The two ninth graders quickly separated. Mr. Benson, the English teacher was coming out back for a smoke and happened to see the Police Chief's daughter and one of Hawkins'

top students making out behind the school.

"Sorry Mr. Benson," Mike said, standing and helping Jane to her feet. "It won't happen again."

"Well, it better not! I wouldn't have to tell Chief Hopper his daughter was doing any questionable things with one of Hawkins' brightest, now would I?" Mr. Benson teased.

"N-no sir! Come on, Jane," Mike said, beet red. He led the Jane back around to the front entrance. Mr. Benson rolled his eyes and lit his cigarette. *Damn kids.*

The party had been allowed to go to the Hopper's house after school on one condition: they let Jane rest and weren't being stupid. Easy enough. So there they were. Jane was on the couch with her head resting on Mike's lap with a blanket draped over her. Max and Lucas were squeezed into Hopper's recliner, which left Will and Dustin on the floor. Mike was totally babying Jane, Lucas thought. But, she of all people deserved to be babied. She'd saved their asses plenty of times.

"Do you guys know what's coming up next in a couple weeks?" Max asked.

"Why don't you tell us?" Mike said with sass. Max rolled her eyes at him. *He's only moody because Jane isn't feeling well*, she reminded herself.

"The Homecoming dance," she explained.

"Oh yeah! What's this year's theme?" Will asked, looking excited.

"I think it's 'Back to the Future'," Dustin said.

"Whoa, that is like *totally tubular*," Lucas joked, raising his arms mockingly. Max tried to suppress her smile as she glared at him.

"Anyways, that could be fun, right Jane?" Max said, bringing her conversation to the point. She wanted to make Jane feel better, have something to look forward to.

"Yeah. Really fun," Jane said weakly.

"We can go dress shopping together. I bet my mom would take us. Or Nancy or something," Max suggested.

Jane gave a nod. The boys looked uninterested, except Mike. *If homecoming goes half as well as the Snowball did, it would be worth going*, he thought.

"Didn't Carter ask you to that dance, Jane?" Dustin wondered, trying to remember. The most exciting part about that day was when she broke his fingers, but something about a dance sounded familiar.

"Would you shut up?" Lucas shoved Dustin, giving him a *wtf* look. Mike shot daggers at Dustin.

"Never mind, sorry!" Dustin said, covering his tracks. Jane laughed at him halfheartedly.

18. Chapter 18

Sorry for the late upload! Happy reading and don't forget to review! I promise the next chapter will be more exciting.

Hopper picked Jane up from Joyce's house after work and took her to a small restaurant for dinner. Jane loved eating out because Hopper, although he tried, was not the best cook. Also, it made her feel more normal. Eating in a restaurant was something new for her that almost everyone else had been doing their whole lives.

"You have to order *real* food, okay? Then you can have some eggos when we get home, deal?" Hopper said, opening his menu. Jane nodded excitedly.

She decided on a club sandwich and fries with a Coca-cola (which she had to beg her dad for since it had caffeine in it on a school night). Hopper got a steak with a baked potato, also with a Coke. When the waitress brought their drinks out, Hopper made his move.

"So, have you thought about when you'll be ready to tell me about Chicago?" he asked distantly, swirling his straw as if to look more nonchalant.

"Yes," she replied, mimicking his straw swirling. He rolled his eyes at her and dropped the act.

"And?" he pressed, looking deeply into her eyes. She glared back.

"Ask me what you want to know," she said simply. *God, she could be so mysterious sometimes*, Hopper commented to himself.

"Alright. You left your Aunt Becky's... then what?"

"Bought a bus ticket."

"How did you know where she was? Or who she was?" Hopper questioned. Jane gave him a look. "Oh right. Dumb question. So... you find her. What then?"

"Met her and her friends. Her friends were... skeptical?" she made it a question, unsure that she was using the word correctly. Hopper nodded and she continued. "Kali took me in once she realized."

Hopper took a moment to soak this all in. "What exactly did Kali take you into? I saw her and her... gang. They look like trouble," he said darkly.

"They went after..." Jane trailed off, knowing how paranoid Hopper could be if they discussed anything in public. He understood: Bad Men. Okay so.... Revenge sister and Runaway combined forces for one day. It must have left some kind of lasting impression on Jane if Kali had really taught her so much in that short amount of time.

"How did she teach you?" he switched topics.

"She showed me what emotions to channel. How to make myself stronger." Hopper nodded, making a mental note to ask Jane for more details when they got home.

"Alrighty, here's this and," the waitress said, handing down plates. "this. Can I get you anything else?"

"I think we're all set, thanks," Hopper said, flashing a fake smile. Jane dug in as if this meal would be her last, just like she always did.

Billy Hargrove was driving home from his father's court date. Billy wasn't required to go since they had his statement on file, but he went anyways just to see that asshole put in his place. Billy took a drag of his cigarette as he drove on the empty road, feeling a mixture of emotions that he couldn't name. He was relieved, hurt, happy, confused, and most of all he felt like breaking something. Billy licked his lips and took another drag as he turned onto the street to the house. As he parked, Billy wondered when he should head back to California. He had nothing here for him. Now that he wasn't forced to stay here, Billy realized he didn't really have anything at all, not even back in California, though the girls were hotter there. The walls Billy built and the hate he'd acquired had been sealed inside of him. He wasn't close to anyone. But hey, at least his dad was going to jail.

Mike sat at the dinner table with Nancy, Holly, Ted, and Karen. He'd been trying to get closer with his mom since he felt sort of bad at how he'd pushed her away last year, but with his dad, Mike didn't even think he wanted to be close to him.

"How is it?" Karen asked as she watched her family stare into their food and ignore each other.

"Good Mom," Nancy said with a suspicious amount of sweetness.

"It's good," Mike agreed, pushing his peas around with his fork. Jane hated peas, Mike thought, which unwillingly brought a smile to his face.

"I haven't seen Jane in a while. How's she doing? I was sad to hear she had the flu last week," Mrs. Wheeler asked, as if reading Mike's mind.

"She's better," Mike said.

"That's great Mike," Nancy commented.

"What's gotten into you?" Karen vocalized what everyone was thinking.

"What? I can't just be nice? Okay whatever. Me and Jonathon were thinking about going on a college tour of NYU November 18th. He said he would drive us," Nancy rambled.

"NYU?" Ted chimed in. At least he'd been listening. "That's nice."

"Well, that's a pretty far drive, isn't it? And you would have to stay the night there," Karen told her, trying to talk some sense into her.

"I know. Just think about it," Nancy said, getting up. She planted a kiss on her Mom's cheek to really seal the deal as she put her plate in the kitchen. Mike rolled his eyes at her goody-two-shoes act.

"Bye-bye," Holly called as Nancy walked out.

Will was eating stew his mom had just finished making. She was

eager to hear how it tasted since it was a new recipe. Will swallowed and grinned.

"It tastes really good," Will stated, which caused Joyce's lips to turn up into a smile.

"Amazing," Jonathon agreed from where he sat across the table from Will. "Sit down and eat Mom," Jonathon told her since she was still fiddling with some dishes in the sink.

"Oh alright," she exhaled, grabbing herself a bowl. Will loved this. Spending time with his family when there was no immediate threat to their existence.

"How was school guys?" Joyce asked her sons.

"Not bad," Jonathon said as Will shrugged and nodded in agreement.

"Anything exciting happen?" Joyce pressed, doing the usual 'Mom' thing to get her kids to spill about their lives.

"Mrs. Spring put my painting in the art showcase at school. She said it was the best in the class," Will said, giving a hesitant smile, as if not wanting to brag.

"Oh honey, that's so exciting! What did you paint?" Joyce asked. Will shifted in his seat and took another bite of stew.

"A superhero," Will said softly. He really didn't want to tell his mom that this particular superhero was flying from a radio shack holding a flashlight and walkie talkie, but Will knew his mom could probably guess who it was without all of those clues.

"Oh," Joyce breathed. She quickly perked back up. "I'm sure it's wonderful. We can hang it up when you take it home," she told him. Will nodded.

"I got asked to do the photography at the Homecoming game," Jonathon said, changing the subject.

"That's awesome! I don't know where you kids get your talent from, certainly not me!" their mom replied. "Will, you and your friends

should go to the game too. That could be fun, right?"

"Yeah, totally!" Will agreed.

The Byers house phone rang and Joyce stood to answer it.

"Hello? Oh hi, Hop! It's no problem. Of course! See you then. Okay, bye!"

"What was that?" Jonathon asked when his mom sat back down.

"Hopper asked if I could take Jane tomorrow after school," Joyce explained.

"Sweet!" Will said. "Can the rest of the party come over too?" Will asked. Joyce couldn't help but smile at his enthusiasm.

"Sure, sweetie. That sounds like fun."

19. Chapter 19

I hope you guys enjoy this chapter, I am definitely setting this up for a finale. Should I write a sequel once this is finished? Let me know and don't forget to review!

Kali and her friends had been staying in a motel for an entire week. It was pretty rundown and not very popular, so it was easy to make the office worker of the place 'think' she didn't see anyone check out the room they were currently occupying. Kali just couldn't have a paper trail, even all the way out here in Indiana, but her friends were becoming restless.

"When are you gonna get Shirley to pull her end of the deal, Kali? We can't stay in this shit hole forever!" Axel exclaimed one day, exasperated.

"She needs time to heal," Kali said coldly. The others didn't see how she had fought that thing. It was astounding. Kali had never been quite so awed from that kind of power in her life. Even Kali had felt incredibly weak for almost two whole days, and she had barely lifted a finger compared to what Jane had done.

"How much longer?" Dottie asked.

"I'll give her a week," Kali stated. "And then, we're going to end that man who thinks of himself as our father."

It was not unusual for Jane to visit people in the black space of her mind while she slept. Right not, as she dozed off, she watched Mike fast asleep in his own bed. She sighed contentedly in her dream as she moved closer. Mike had his mouth slightly open, with one arm behind his head and one hanging off the bed. His blanket had been wrapped oddly around one foot while the other had no blanket coverage at all. It was the most adorable thing Jane had ever seen. She felt a heat in her cheeks that she couldn't explain. Then Jane's dream changed suddenly as Mike's image disintegrated.

"I'll give her a week," a voice said in the distance. Jane turned around slowly, already knowing who it was. Kali sat on a motel bed looking down at a map. Jane didn't move closer, instead, she fell silent and put all her energy into waking up.

"Oh," Jane sighed, startled as she shot up in bed. Relief washed over her as she realized she had woken up. *One more week, huh?* Jane rubbed her eyes, now completely awake. She glanced at the clock on her nightstand. 12:37am. Yikes. Jane got up to grab something to drink, trying not to wake up her dad. When she reached the end of the short hallway though, Jane realized Hopper hadn't gone to bed yet.

"What are you doing up?" he asked from his recliner.

"Just thirsty," Jane said, walking past him into the kitchen. Hopper seemed to accept that answer and went back to the book he was reading, pausing once to light a cigarette. When Jane was out of her father's view, she leaned on the counter and took a shaky breath. One more week and then she'd have to face the biggest monster of all. Papa. Jane grabbed some water and took a few sips before heading back to her room.

"Night Jane," Hopper called behind her.

"Night," she said, closing her door.

She laid in bed, knowing she wouldn't be able to fall asleep any time soon. Jane looked at the walkie talkie that was on her nightstand wishfully. She knew she shouldn't wake Mike up when he was sleeping so soundly, but she really wanted to talk to him. Mike always knew what to say to make her feel better. Sighing, Jane grabbed her Teddy Bear under her arm and rolled onto her side. She tried to close her eyes, but only saw flashbacks of her time at Hawkins lab. It was where she'd spent most of her life, but it was not a time in her life she liked to think about often. All Jane had ever felt until she met Mike was fear. Jane tried to shake those thoughts from her mind, but they kept growing. Jane thought about her mother, the rainbow room, the bath, crushing cans, killing lab workers with a twitch of her head. Jane thought about 450 volts, about opening the gate, about festering wounds, about killing the Demogorgon, *goodbye*

Mike. Suddenly, Jane burst into tears, sobbing. She bit her blanket so that Hopper wouldn't hear her. Without even thinking, Jane grabbed her walkie.

"Mike?" Jane said breathlessly.

No response. Jane set it back down on the stand, now crying even harder.

"...Jane?" came a murky reply. Quickly, Jane grabbed the walkie talkie again.

"Mike, are you there?"

"Yes, always. What is it?"

"One week before," Jane stopped as another sob racked through her, "Sister will need me." Mike didn't reply right away.

"I'll go with you. I won't let you go alone. Okay?"

"Okay," Jane agreed, actually feeling better knowing that Mike would be there. She knew it was probably very dangerous for him to tag along, but Jane had no doubt in her mind that she would kill anyone or anything that laid a hand on her Mike.

Max woke up for school like she did any normal day. She brushed her hair, threw on some clothes and went to the kitchen to catch some breakfast. This morning, however, when Max opened her bedroom door, she noticed some very odd things. Their TV was missing, some drawers in her house looked like they'd been picked through. Max cautiously went into her mom's room, noticing that Susan's jewelry drawer had been swept clean. Max walking back towards the kitchen. She saw her mom sitting at the table looking incredibly worn out.

"Mom, what the hell happened?"

"Billy... Billy left," her mother told her, with the most mentally unstable sounding sarcasm.

"And he took all our shit?" Max asked, now angry. Her mother

nodded. "What the hell Mom, file a police report! Apparently following the law isn't in the Hargrove genetic code."

"I know, Sweetie. I know. I will... I'm just so tired. Of everything." Susan slumped her head.

"Well, if you aren't gonna do anything, give me some cash and I'll change the locks," Max said, giving her mother a look. Susan sighed.

"That's my girl."

Will woke up from a dreamless sleep, something that had been occurring for the last seven days since Jane had killed the Mindflayer. He sighed contentedly as he got dressed for school.

"Breakfast is ready," Jonathon called from the kitchen

"Okay!" Will replied, leaving his room.

"Has anyone seen my keys?" Joyce said frantically, searching her purse.

"Here Mom," Will said, rolling his eyes as he grabbed her keys from on top of the microwave.

"Oh, thank you," she told him, grabbing his face to plant a quick kiss on it.

"Jonathon, you're taking Will to and from school, right?"

"Yes Mom," Jonathon said.

"Okay," Joyce responded.

"Get to work," Will said to his mother, who was already late.

"Have a great day!" Joyce called, giving two huge air kisses to her boys. It was a normal day for the Byers.

Steve drove Dustin to school today because his mom was at some

conference super early in the morning. Steve really didn't mind because he actually liked Dustin a lot as a friend.

"Okay, let me go over this again," Dustin said. Steve nodded. "Hey, are you going to the Homecoming dance? Yes? Oh cool so am I! Do you want to go with me?" Dustin recited to some imaginary girl.

"Very nice," Steve told Dustin encouragingly.

"Nancy said girls are dumb at our age, so even if I get turned down it's whatever," Dustin said.

"Nancy is usually right," Steve replied with a hint of sadness. "And here we are. My old stomping grounds," Steve said as they pulled up at the school.

"King Steve," Dustin said playfully.

"Knock 'em dead, tiger," Steve hyped as Dustin stepped out of the car.

"RRRRR," Dustin growled back.

"Man, I told you to stop doing that."

"You love it."

"Ms. Hopper, glad to see you're enjoying class," Mr. Benson taunted, startling Jane awake in her seat. Jane rubbed her eyes, dead tired after only three hours of sleep.

"Sorry," Jane said quietly, pinching her arm to keep herself from dozing off again. *This was going to be a long day.*

Eventually, the lunch bell rang and Jane shuffled to her locker with little energy in her step.

"You ready?" Mike asked, walking up to her. She smiled and nodded. Mike took her hand in his and they walked to the lunchroom together.

"I cannot believe you're doing this," Max was saying as Mike and Jane

walked up.

"What?" Mike asked.

"Dustin is going to ask Margot Pice to Homecoming," Lucas explained, grinning.

"It's gonna be hilarious," Max teased.

"Yeah yeah, whatever," Dustin dismissed.

"I'm sure she'll say yes," Will chimed in, causing Dustin to flash a smile.

"Okay, wish me luck," Dustin said, standing. He marched over to where a cute girl was sitting with two other girls. She had brown hair, big green eyes covered in glasses and a tan complexion that was most likely of Hispanic descent. The party couldn't hear anything, but they all watched in awe as Dustin walked right up to her and started talking. They could see Margot blush and then nod. Dustin turned back and started walking to the table again, giving a huge grin. "Guess who has a Homecoming date? THIS GUY!"

20. Chapter 20

This update is super late, so sorry about that! My crazy life got in the way! Anyway, I hope you enjoy this chapter and let me know what you think in a review!

Jane hopped onto the back of Mike's bike as they headed towards the Byers to hang out after school. The air was getting colder and Jane pressed tightly against Mike to stay warm. She felt him laugh at her closeness but she just snuggled her head into his shoulder in response. The party finally reached Will's house, where they all ran inside. Jane hovered by the front door.

"What's up?" Mike asked, sensing her discomfort.

"Do you think I should tell them? About Papa?" Mike pondered that for a moment.

"I think you should tell them whatever you're comfortable with. They might be able to help, but you don't have to tell them if you don't want to."

"Thanks Mike," Jane said, soothed by his words. She took a step forward and planted a soft kiss on his mouth before walking into the kitchen towards everyone else. Mike couldn't help but smile as she walked away, her kiss still lingering on his lips.

Hopper was cooped up in the town library, looking up old newspaper articles of missing children that matched Kali's description. He knew that Jane was not telling the entire truth about something, and Hopper wanted to find out. He didn't trust Kali, not one bit. When the Chief had read about twenty useless articles, he came across one that stood out to him... *Indian Girl kidnapped from London*. Hopper sat back and looked at the picture of the little girl in the article. It certainly looked a lot like Kali...he thought. He made a copy of the article before heading back to the station to figure out just who this girl was.

Jonathon and Nancy were at the Wheeler's kitchen table filling out their college applications to NYU.

"You really don't have to apply here just because I am, you know," Jonathon told her softly.

"I know. But it just so happens that they have an amazing investigative journalism program," Nancy countered. Jonathon nodded, trying not to grin very wide. He never thought he'd end up with someone like Nancy. Nancy was beautiful for one, and totally out of Jonathon's league. Nancy was popular, smart, well liked. She was pretty much the whole package and through some very unlikely circumstances, they'd fallen for each other.

"You're going to pull the curtain down on all these people," Jonathon told her.

"And you'll be there to get it all on camera."

They party was all sitting in the Byers' living room, finishing up their homework so they could start a campaign. Jane still didn't really understand the game, but no one was opposed to stopping and explaining things to her, especially Mike. Jane focused in on her English homework, which was a one-page reflection on 'Romeo and Juliet', which they had just finished reading.

"Ohh, that's good," Max commented, glancing at Jane's paper and writing down something similar.

Soon, everyone was finished with their work and Dustin went to get the game set up at the kitchen table. Jane grabbed Mike's arm while everyone headed to the kitchen. He turned to look down at her. It seemed to Jane that he was growing taller by the day.

"I think I'm going to tell them," Jane whispered. Mike nodded reassuringly, letting a shy smile enter his face as they went to join the others.

"Hey, I'm playing too," Max objected when Dustin didn't set her place at the table.

"I thought you hated this game. 'It's a dumb game for boys! I'd rather play Dig Dug and get like a billion points'," Dustin said, mocking a high pitched girl's voice that sounded nothing like Max's.

"I don't even sound like that!"

"But you want to play, right Max?" Will argued. "You're our Zoomer."

"Yeah!" Max agreed, shooting Will a thankful glance.

"I knew you were secretly a nerd like the rest of us," Lucas teased.

Mike and Jane took their spots at the table silently, which cued the rest of the party in that something was up.

"Guys, Jane wants to tell you something," Mike said, which caused everyone to sit down in their seats nervously. Jane generally didn't want to share things, so this was definitely odd. Will just hoped it didn't have to do with the upside down.

"Sister Kali," Jane began, taking a breath. "I made a deal with her," she told them slowly.

"What kind of deal?" Lucas asked with an air of paranoia.

"She needs my help to find..." Jane trailed off, not wanting to even speak his name. "The Bad Man. And she wants us to kill him. Together," Jane finished, looking everyone in the eye with a hardening expression.

"Who's the 'Bad Man'?" Max asked, the only one who didn't know about Dr. Brenner and all that he'd done to the kids at the lab.

"Papa," Jane said, her face becoming stone-like.

"He was the Doctor at the lab before Dr. Owens. He's the one that experiemented..." Mike started explaining before glancing at Jane. "He's the one responsible all the kids at the lab."

Max's eyes widened in understanding.

"Are you going to-to kill him?" Will asked.

"Yes," Jane said, without hesitation.

"When?" Dustin asked.

"Six days from now," Jane said. "That's when she said she'd come."

"But, that's a school day," Lucas pointed out. "What are you going to tell the Chief?"

"Maybe you could locate Brenner and then go after him on the weekend," Dustin suggested with a shrug.

"Maybe," Mike agreed. "But either way, I'm going with her."

"What just a minute," Dustin said. "Are you shitting me?"

"What?" Mike exclaimed.

"You? Killing someone? No way!" Max said.

"I don't think any of this is a good idea," Will pointed out.

"Well, if you're going with, I think I should too. You know, safety in numbers, right?" Lucas said.

"You're not going without me," Max told Lucas.

"Woah, you think you're leaving me out of this?" Dustin said. "I can ask Steve to come too!"

"This is not a good idea," Will chimed in again.

"No," Jane said quietly. All eyes were quickly on her. "Just Mike."

At the station, Hopper motioned for Steve to enter his office.

"Harrington, I need more than one pair of eyes on this," Hopper said.

"What is it?" Steve asked.

"Another kid from the... Older, different..." Hopper made eye contact with Steve so he caught his drift. "She's the one that helped..." Again,

Hopper left the sentence hanging, but Steve still got the message. "I have a bad feeling about her. I want you to get in touch with this guy, he can help you figure out who she is and what she wants with... Okay?" Hopper handed Steve a business card that read 'Murray Bauman: Private Investigator'.

"Hi guys! I brought pizza," Joyce said, walking in the front door.

"Oh Ms. B, you're the BEST," Dustin said.

"Thanks Ms. Byers," Lucas and Max chorused.

"What kind did you get?" Will asked, getting up to help her carry the boxes into the kitchen.

"One's cheese, because I heard someone doesn't like pepperoni," Joyce said, eyeing Jane who smiled shyly. "And the other is pepperoni and olives."

"My favorite," Will said, giving his mom a loving look.

"This looks great Ms. Byers," Mike told her.

"Well, come on guys! Grab a plate. I think I have some soda in the garage..."

Once Hopper picked Jane up from the Byers, they had come inside and put on one of those soap operas that Jane loved to watch. Hopper just sat through it, barely paying attention because this was not the kind of show he would ever choose to watch, but he loved spending time with Jane, no matter what was on the TV. Once the program ended, Hopper switched the TV off, ignoring Jane's annoyed sigh.

"Okay Kiddo," Hopper said. "I think we should have a little chat."

"What?" Jane asked, looking at him with round brown eyes.

"Well, I have some questions for you. First of all, how are you feeling?"

"Better," Jane said truthfully. She really didn't feel sore anymore.

"That's good," Hopper didn't really know how to have the conversation he wanted to be having right now. God, Joyce was so much better at this than him. She could console her children without difficulty and both of her boys trusted her with anything. Hopper tried pulling on his paternal side. "I know this year has been rough, okay? We both learned a lot. We both messed up a lot, but I think we both know what we mean to each other," Hopper said. Jane nodded along, a smile playing on the sides of her mouth. "I just want you to know that you can tell me anything, alright? I won't get mad like I did last year, okay?" Jane nodded again before pulling him into a hug that Hopper was definitely not expecting.

"I know," Jane said into his neck as they hugged.

"Okay kid, now get ready for bed."

Jane headed to her room, ignoring the guilt that made it hard for her to swallow.

21. Chapter 21

I'm going to try to wrap this story up by chapter 25 and then maybe? start a sequel if you guys are interested. Anyways, enjoy this chapter and leave a review so I know what you think!

"Look at the camera please," Steve heard over an intercom. He looked around until he saw the camera positioned right at the door and gave a small wave. *Man, who the hell did Hopper send me to?* The door swung open and a middle aged man stood at the door.

"Well well well, if it isn't Steve Harrington. What can I do for you?" he asked.

"Uh, I'm looking for uh..." Steve glanced at the index card. "Murray Bauman."

"Come on in."

"Wait, how did you know my name?" Steve wondered as he walked inside. He received no answer.

"I'm guessing Chief Hopper sent you," Murray said.

"Yes... uh he wants me to see what you know about this girl," Steve said, handing Murray the article from his jacket pocket.

"Ah," Murray said, looking the copied article over carefully. "Follow me."

Everyone was acting very wary of Jane all week, and although she wasn't amazing at reading social cues, even she could tell. At least she'd made it to Friday. Then she'd only have three days to prepare before she went to fulfill her promise. The thought made Jane queasy. She asked to go to the bathroom and her Algebra teacher had said yes. When she went to the girl's bathroom, Jane was relieved to find that it was empty. Glancing in the mirror, Jane noticed how tired she looked. She hadn't been sleeping well. Jane splashed some

cold water on her cheeks, careful not to get any on the mascara she was wearing that Nancy had bought her. It made her look pretty and less tired. Jane reluctantly started making her way back to her class.

"Jane!" she heard from behind her. She turned her head and saw Carter walking her way.

"What?" Jane said, surprised that after scaring the shit out of him, he would willingly ever speak to her again.

"Just- I need to tell you something, okay? I'm sorry for being such a dick. I don't know what your... deal is," Carter explained, making 'deal' code word for 'you're a freak who moved my body with your mind'. "But I feel bad for treating you and Mike like that. It was my bad. Anyways, I'll tell the other guys to lay off on you," he said, starting to walk the other way.

"Carter," Jane said, causing him to turn to look back at her. "It's okay." He nodded and they went their separate ways. Jane wondered why Carter had a change of heart, but didn't think too much about it as she entered Algebra. The clock told her she only had seventeen minutes until lunch. She could handle that.

"What do you have for me, Harrington?" Hopper asked when Steve got back to the station. They entered the Chief's office and closed the door.

"Alright, so her full name is Kali Prasad and she was taken from her family at the age of nine. Her Mom looked everywhere for her, Kali's disappearance was all over the news, but no one ever found her. Her mother died in '78 of cancer and she never knew her father. She escaped from the lab when she was fifteen. She stayed with a family in the first three years of her freedom, but she ran away and has been on her own ever since. She's wanted in about four states, but none have her name. Just photos," Steve spilled. Hopper nodded.

"How the hell does that guy get this information," Hopper wondered aloud.

"Hell if I know," Steve agreed. The guy had seemed like a freak, but

he also made lots of jokes about how 'everybody likes Steve'. Steve laughed along, but really had no idea what he was talking about. The guy was a wack-job.

"Thanks," Hopper said in dismissal and Steve left the room. *What exactly does Kali want with my daughter, and what isn't Jane telling me?* Hopper thought.

Saturday morning rolled around and Hopper was surprised when Jane slept in until ten o'clock.

"Morning, sleepyhead," Hopper commented as Jane entered the living room with a massive case of bed head. "I'll go throw your eggos in the toaster." Jane smiled and followed her dad into the kitchen where she poured herself some milk. "How'd you sleep?" Hopper asked.

"Good," was her standard response. She didn't mention that she was up until almost two am with anxiety.

"You probably needed to sleep in," Hopper replied. Her eggos popped and Hopper put them on a plate and handed her some syrup.

"Mmmm," Jane said as she dug in.

"What are your plans for today?" Hopper asked. Jane shrugged.

"Can I go to Mike's?" she asked. Hopper rolled his eyes.

"Sure kid. I'll drive you."

"How much do you think I should pack? I don't know how long we're going to be gone," Mike was saying. Jane just shrugged, unsure herself.

"Depends," she said.

"Well maybe you should get in touch with your sister and see what she says," Mike suggested. Jane gave him a very intimidating stare. "Or not, I mean it's up to you," he backtracked. She cracked a smile at that. Jane just rested her head on Mike's shoulder and tried not to

think about what was very quickly approaching.

Tuesday morning was a lot like every other morning. Hopper dropped Jane off at school, Jonathon took Will and Nancy, Mike, Dustin, and Lucas rode to school, and Max got dropped off by Susan. Just like every other day. Except, Mike and Jane walked in the school and then walked right out the back door. Jane sat behind the bleachers by the football field and closed her eyes. In her mind, she saw Kali putting makeup on inside a motel room. Jane saw on a sheet of paper on the dresser that told her what the motel was called. She opened her eyes and recited the name to Mike who flipped through a Yellow Pages until he found what they were looking for. Then they got on Mike's bike and headed out. They had to get to her first, otherwise they would run the risk of getting caught by Hopper. That simply could not happen.

"Today's the day," Dottie jumped excitedly.

"Are you excited Kal?" Axel asked, giving Kali an elbow.

"I'm ready to be done with him," Kali said with a slight smile.

"When do you think we should get Jane?" Funshine asked. Before Kali could answer, Mick started talking.

"Okay, am I seeing what I think I'm seeing?" Mick asked suddenly, peeking out the motel curtains. The others walked up to see what she meant, but they parted so Kali could get the best view.

"Oh," Kali gasped surprised as she saw Jane in the distance riding up to the Motel parking lot with a boy on a bike. "Well, that makes our jobs easier," she said. "Let's go."

Mike was tired after riding almost thirty miles to get to the Motel, but when they got to the parking lot, he realized they didn't know what room Kali was staying in. He stopped in the back corner of the lot to put his kickstand down and they both got off the bike.

"Where do you think they are?" Mike asked.

"There," Jane said pointing as Kali and her friends walked down the exterior stairs of the building. Mike tried to hide his discomfort. Kali's friends were intimidating.

"Hello Sister," Kali called as they walked toward her and Mike.

"What's up, Shirley?" Axel teased. Jane cracked a small smile and Mike tried not to look as awkward as he felt.

"Who's the fella?" Dottie asked, pointing at Mike with a flyswatter.

"This is Mike. My boyfriend," Jane said bluntly. Mike tried not to blush.

"Oh, you have a boyfriend now, huh?" Mick said, pacing as the two parties were now face to face.

"Well, I suppose he can come along as well. You ready Jane?" Kali asked.

"Yes," Jane replied, her voice not giving away her doubts, which she was thankful for.

"Alright, let's get to it."

Mick was in the driver's seat, Axel took the passenger, which left Funshine and Dottie in the middle. Kali, Jane, and Mike were all in the final row of seats in the van. Jane seemed oddly comfortable here, which made Mike feel strangely jealous.

"Do you need this?" Kali asked, reaching from her bag to pull out a picture of Dr. Brenner and a black piece of cloth. Jane nodded and took them. Mick turned the van radio onto static and everyone waited in anticipation as Jane put her blindfold on. After about two minutes, Jane pulled the blindfold off and wiped her nose with the back of her hand.

"Cleveland," Jane said. "In a building. It looked like..." Jane swallowed. "It looked like a hospital or maybe..."

"A lab," Kali finished. "Well, you heard her. Let's get going towards

Cleveland."

22. Chapter 22

Sorry that the last chapter seemed so rushed, I'm trying to wrap this story up by chapter 25 and I had some reviews saying how I was dragging out the climax too much! Trying to find happy medium in this chapter, though. Enjoy!

Mike was only comforted by Jane's hand that was on his during the car ride. Jane and Kali were picking out a mask for Mike to wear, which only heightened Mike's anxiety. Dottie and Axel were dancing to the radio, which was playing punk music he'd never heard. Jane decided she liked the ghost mask for Mike and he begrudgingly tried it on.

"Lookin good!" Dottie commented. Mike took the mask off and smiled shyly.

Nancy got home from school and went up to put her backpack in her room. She saw a note on her pillow and opened it.

Sorry, I don't know when I'll be home. Cover for me! -M

"What an asshole," Nancy muttered. He must be doing something dumb, she thought. Now she'd have to whip up some kind of lie that her mom would believe when Mike didn't come home from Will's. "Jonathon?" Nancy called coming down the stairs.

"Yeah?" he replied from the couch.

"Do you think Will would know where Mike is? He left a note asking me to cover for him."

"He might. Do you wanna stop by my house and ask him? I think the other boys and Max are over too. And Jane," Jonathon said.

"Yeah. Let's ask them," Nancy responded. She knew Mike could be an ass sometimes, but he didn't usually sneak around... The gears in Nancy's head started grinding. Something was definitely up.

When they reached the city, Jane went into the void again to get a better location. She saw Papa in the distance surrounded by the blackness of her mind. Jane tried not to think too hard about the fact that very shortly she would be seeing that man again for the first time in two years. As she moved forward, she started to see that Papa was leaning on a desk, reading some type of file. Jane continued moving forward until she saw a piece of mail on the desk with an address.

"8134 Thirty Seventh Street," Jane said, pulling the blindfold off.

"You heard her," Kali said as Mick nodded and turned. "Funshine, get the supplies ready."

"Sure thing," he replied. Funshine began opening duffel bags. Mike's heart dropped when he saw how many guns were inside. Funshine started loading them and handed one to Dottie and Axel. Kali caught Mike's eye and seemed to notice his discomfort.

"We'll only need them to get inside. Places like that are hard to get inside of." Mike swallowed and nodded. Jane gave his hand a reassuring rub.

"Okay people, we're not far," Mick announced. Dottie jumped excitedly in her seat.

"What's the plan, Kali?" Axel asked.

"We'll wait for a car to go through the gate and I'll conceal us so we won't be seen," Kali started. "Once we're inside... Well I was hoping Jane could lead us to him. Depending on whether he's alone or not, we might have you guys watch the door. Jane and I might want to do this privately." Kali's eyes glistened and she looked down at Jane who nodded solemnly.

"Sounds good to me," Funshine said. Mike got the impression that everyone in this car, with the exception of himself and Jane, would do almost anything Kali asked them to. Like they were indebted to her.

"Where do you want me to meet you?" Mick asked as she pulled into

a parking lot. Everyone glanced across the street at a large building surrounded by ten feet tall fences.

"Just do circles around the building. I'm not sure where the exit will be," Kali said.

"Don't you think this is kind of a rush?" Axel asked. "I mean, I know this guy is the big one we've all been waiting for, but shouldn't we at least scope out possible exits first?"

Everyone looked around expectantly.

"Fine. We'll wait until we have our plan down. Jane, do you think you can find an exit route?" Kali asked.

"I'll try," she replied, throwing her blindfold on again.

"Spill," Nancy said, looking right at Dustin, who she figured would tattle sooner than the others.

"I-I don't know anything!" Dustin denied.

"Will, come on," Jonathon tried. "This isn't funny. Where are Jane and Mike? The Chief is going to flip if he doesn't know where she is."

"Maybe we should just tell them, guys," Will said.

"NO," everyone else called out, causing Will to slump his shoulders in defeat.

"Okay, fine," Dustin said. "They went to go help Jane's sister, Eight."

"Dustin!" Lucas reprimanded.

"They were going to find out anyway," Dustin argued.

"What?" Nancy questioned. "He went *where*?"

"They made some kind of deal when Kali helped save me," Will said, embarrassed. "Now Jane has to help Kali with something."

"What something?" Jonathon asked.

"I don't know," Will lied. "Just finding where someone is or something."

"Yeah, she wouldn't tell us," Max chimed in. "Mike didn't want her to go alone." The others nodded frantically, trying not to sell out their friends completely.

Nancy stood up and started walking out the door.

"Where are you going?" Lucas asked.

"The station. Hopper's gonna kill them."

Steve was at work, doing the usual, which was listening to a townswoman complain that her son's bike was missing from their backyard. It was a pretty normal day at the station. That is, until Nancy and Jonathon walked in.

"Yeah, we'll keep our eye out Ma'am," Steve told the woman, standing up to see why Nancy and Jonathon were there. "Hi," Steve said to the pair.

"We have a problem," Nancy said urgently, walking past him into Hopper's office. Jonathon and Steve shared an awkward glance as they followed her inside.

"What are you two doing in here?" Hopper asked when Nancy barged into his office, followed by Jonathon and Steve. Steve gave the Chief an apologetic glance that said, *I don't really know either*.

"Jane and Mike... they ditched school," Jonathon chimed in. That certainly got Hopper's attention.

"What?" Steve asked.

"Where the hell are they, then?" Hopper questioned.

"That's what we're trying to figure out. Apparently they went to go help Jane's sister," Nancy explained.

"Shit," Steve and Hopper said at the same time.

"I knew there was something she wasn't telling me," Hopper said, standing up angrily. He started pacing and muttering curse words under his breath.

"So, what are we going to do? The kids don't know where they went," Jonathon asked.

Hopper lifted his head suddenly, as if a lightbulb had just turned on inside his head. He grabbed his hat and coat and walked out the door.

"Wait- where are you?" Nancy asked.

"We're going to Joyce's."

The masked group walked up to the gate silently, since the guard couldn't see them. Kali had them follow a car inside and kept them invisible as they made it to the front door. The building looked a lot like Hawkins lab, except maybe ten years newer, and a lot smaller since it was just outside of the city. They all silently walked up to the door and waited for someone to swipe in. Kali grabbed the door and waved everyone to run inside quickly before it became suspicious for the door not to have closed yet. Mike stayed by Jane's side, trying not to think very hard about the fact that he was carrying an automatic weapon. He knew he wouldn't use it, but Mike needed it for protection. At least, that's what Kali told him.

Kali was quickly becoming tired and they ducked into an uninhabited hallway, where she finally unveiled them.

"Jane," Kali said exhaustedly, reaching behind her mask to wipe her nose. Jane nodded and began leading them in the direction of the room where Papa was. She felt like a magnet, being pulled in the direction of who she was looking for. The group had to keep ducking into rooms or corridors to avoid being seen, but luckily, they hadn't been spotted yet.

"There," Jane said, pointing at a door at the end of a hallway. They could hear voices so they scrambled out of view as two men in lab coats walked by with clipboards. They went into a different room

than the one Dr. Brenner was in, so once the coast was clear, the group headed cautiously down the hallway. Mike grabbed Jane's hand as she and Kali led the group towards the room. Slipping inside quietly, Kali motioned for the others to stay in the doorway while they slowly shut the door. Jane and Kali continued walking into the room, where Mike followed a pace behind. Once they entered the room, they could see the familiar tall man with white hair, now sitting at the desk going through files.

"Pretty risky showing up here, isn't it?" Brenner said, turning to face them. He gestured to a wall of TV's behind his desk. "Watching the children you made appear out of nowhere in the middle of the hallway was a pleasant surprise though." Brenner's voice was as dry as they remembered it.

"Okay folks, this is the address of the motel we think Kali's gang has been crashing this past week," Hopper said, pointing at a map he had sprawled on the Byers' kitchen table.

"You think they're still there?" Joyce asked, looking up at Hopper.

"They might. I mean, if all they needed Jane to do was find someone's location, then she could do it from anywhere," Steve said. Dustin looked away guiltily. "What?" Steve asked Dustin, reading his face. "What aren't you telling us?"

"Ugh, we might as well," Will said. Everyone looked at him expectantly. "Jane told us what they were doing. They didn't want us to tell you, but I don't think we have a choice anymore."

"Well, where are they?" Joyce asked.

"They're going to find Dr. Brenner. Apparently he survived the Demogorgon," Lucas explained.

"Wait a minute...I'M GOING TO KILL HER," Hopper exclaimed. "Why in HELL would she....?"

"Why would they want to find him?" Joyce asked, confused.

"They're going to kill him, like Kali does to every lab worker she

tracks down. It's revenge," Max explained.

"Shit," Steve said. "What do we do? We have no way of knowing where they could be."

"We can check out the motel. See if there's any clues," Jonathon suggested.

"And they'll have to come back eventually," Hopper said. "Hopefully, they'll make it back."

23. Chapter 23

Another intense chapter! Enjoy and don't forget to review! I'll hopefully only put out two more chapters, and then get started on my sequel. As always, leave me a review and let me know what you think!

Kali and Jane took their masks off, revealing devilish expressions.

"You saw us, yet, you didn't call security," Kali pointed out.

"Oh Eight. How naïve you still are. I have been keeping tabs on you, you know?" Brenner made a slow walk around his desk tauntingly. "Killing my men, tsk tsk. I thought I raised you better than that." He moved his attention to Jane. "And Eleven... My pride and joy. I have to admit, I was surprised to hear from my dear friend Ray that you were still alive," Brenner went on.

"How did you survive the attack?" Jane asked.

"It was a nasty bite," Papa explained. "But not fatal. Especially when you have friends in high places who will make sure you have the absolute best medical treatment. Even so, I thought for sure destroying that monster would kill you. I was very proud of you, though, Eleven. You are my most special creation."

"Don't," Jane said coldly, "call me Eleven. It's Jane." Brenner gave her a look with raised eyebrows.

"Very well then. Why have you two returned to me?" Brenner asked.

"We came to finish you," Kali spoke. "Okay Jane, are you ready?"

"Yes," Jane said.

"You wouldn't hurt your Papa," Brenner said, reading the slight hesitation on Jane's face. Jane looked at Kali who gave her an approving nod. Jane lowered her head and gave Brenner a glance, pushing him back into the wall, unable to move.

"Eleven, I am your home," Brenner started, trying desperately to move but the force of Jane's powers were keeping him restrained.

"No," she said, pushing him harder. Mike could hear ribs cracking and winced. Brenner was now gasping for breath.

"You've... grown... stronger," Papa muttered, gasping for breath.

"Don't do it too fast, I want to savor it," Kali whispered into Jane's ear. Mike's heart was racing. This wasn't right. Jane should not be enjoying this. He didn't have much time to think it over because suddenly, alarms started going off in the lab.

"They know we're here," Axel said.

"Hold them off," Kali said, not looking away from Dr. Brenner. "We aren't finished yet."

Axel, Funshine, and Dottie quickly loaded their weapons and pointed them at the closed door.

"You took Jane as a baby... So why me?" Kali asked. "Why take a child who had a mother... a *family*? Why me?" The hardened demeanor Kali usually had was cracking away, revealing a very broken girl.

"You...had...potential..." Brenner said, his ribs making it hard to talk.

"Yes," she agreed. "I did. Keep holding him Jane," Kali instructed. She pulled a knife from where it was clasped on her leg and waved it tauntingly near Brenner's face.

Footsteps could be heard from outside the door, and a lot of them. That was bad news. Suddenly the door was kicked down by about thirty men, all equipped with shields and guns. Mike skirted out of the way as the others shot at them aggressively. Several of the lab's men fell down, shot, but they were still out numbered. Mike and the others ran for cover.

"Kali, hurry up!" Axel shouted, ducking behind a file cabinet.

"Just a little longer," Kali said about to slit the doctor's throat.

That's when Jane heard it. A shot went off. Although there had already been several shots fired from both sides, this particular shot stood out to Jane. On instinct, she pulled Mike toward her and the bullet that was headed his way only grazed his side. Instantly, Mike felt the blow. It was definitely not fatal, thanks to Jane's interference. This all happened in a matter of seconds, but to Jane it felt like an eternity.

They. Hurt. Mike. Jane thought. "Enough!" she said forcefully. Every one of the lab men's necks suddenly snapped. Almost twenty five bodies fell to the floor, dead instantly. The room went silent, the only survivors being Kali and her friends, Mike and Jane, and Dr. Brenner. Everyone was watching Jane in awe. "Mike," she whispered, grabbing onto him, watching the blood that was seeping through his shirt.

"I'm fine," he said, ignoring the pain. Jane suddenly felt very weak and she leaned on the desk for support. That's when Dr. Brenner fell from his position against the wall. Jane was simply too tired to keep him up.

"Jane!" Kali called turning to look at her. Dr. Brenner somehow had the energy to stand up and grabbed Kali by her neck, twisting her arm until the knife was in his possession.

"Let me leave and no one gets hurt," Brenner began, holding the knife to Kali's throat. Papa's voice was strained, confirming Mike's suspicions about broken ribs.

"Remember our training, Jane," Kali said against Brenner's chokehold.

Jane looked up at him, her exhaustion melting away as rage took its place.

"You," Jane said. "You hurt Mama. You took me. You hurt sister. Your men hurt Mike..." Jane was seeing red. "No more."

"Jane," Mike whispered. She looked at him, her eyes hardening.

"No," she said, "more."

With a killer glance, Brenner's eyes began to bleed. He gurgled and

tried to breathe, but blood just poured out of his mouth as well. Kali pushed him off of her and moved away, staring in awe. Jane reached a hand in front of her and concentrated harder. Brenner had blood coming out of his nose and ears now as his insides simply melted.

"Jane," Mike whispered. "You don't have to do this."

"Yes," she said. "I do."

Brenner suddenly fell to the ground, blood pooling around his body. No one made a sound. Then Jane fell onto Mike, who struggled to hold her up since his side was still stinging, though the bleeding had stopped. For a moment, the room was silent. They were interrupted by the alarm, which was now on its second round.

"We need to go," Dottie said.

Funshine grabbed Jane and put her over his shoulder. Dottie and Axel helped Mike walk while Kali led.

"Which way Jane?" Kali asked.

"Right," was Jane's croaky reply. Kali kept them veiled while Jane uttered directions until they made it to the exit.

Walking out into the light, they heard the familiar screech of the van's breaks as Mick pulled up. The group ran up to the van, setting Mike and Jane in the back, everyone else shuffling in as they saw more men running outside from the lab.

"GO GO GO," Axel yelled as they slammed the doors. Mick hit the gas and soon they were blended in the normal traffic. Mike wondered what time it was and what lie Nancy had told their mother. It was definitely past dinner time.

"Okay, Mike. Let me see," Kali said, crouching in front of him. Mike had practically forgotten that he was injured. He pulled his shirt up and took a look at his side. There was a lot of blood, but the actual wound wasn't deep. Kali opened a first-aid kit that she had pulled from under one of the seats. "This might sting," Kali warned. She dabbed an alcohol covered cloth on his side, which did in fact sting, but not anything unmanageable. Kali continued cleaning out his side

and when she was done, it didn't look half bad. She bandaged it up with gauze and tape. "Good as new," Kali told Mike with a smile.

"Thank you," Mike told her genuinely. Kali nodded and moved forward in the van to talk to Axel and Mick.

"Mike," Jane whispered. Mike leaned over to her.

"I'm right here, Jane. I'm right here," Mike said soothingly.

"I'm sorry," she whimpered.

"What are you sorry for?" Mike asked. He looked down into her big brown eyes.

"You saw me doing bad things," Jane said, looking down. "I'm so sorry Mike." Jane smothered a sob. Mike took her into his arms, careful of his wound.

"It's okay, Jane." Mike didn't know what else to say. He couldn't lie to her and say she wasn't terrifying in there. But she had also protected him. Jane was like some sort of avenging angel. Mike just hoped she would lay off the revenge for a little while. "I love you," he whispered into her curls.

"I love you Mike," Jane replied, clinging to him like he was oxygen.

Axel tried not to eavesdrop, but he heard bits of the conversation between Mike and Jane. They were the closest thing to soulmates that he'd ever seen.

"I didn't understand before," Kali said, taking Axel out of his thoughts. "Why Jane left me. But I understand now. It was him," she said quietly. Mick nodded, she had been eavesdropping as well.

"You'll always have us, Kal. Just like she'll always have him," Axel said.

"Since when are you a softie?" Kali teased, bringing back the usual sarcastic demeanor that Axel carried.

"Yeah yeah, whatever," Axel said, waving his hands in defeat.

"How do you feel, Kali?" Dottie asked.

"I feel... alive."

24. Chapter 24

Alright, we're getting down to the wire! Only one more chapter after this! Stay tuned for a sequel, I should be starting that sometime in the near future! As always, leave me a review and let me know what you think!

"How long do you think they'll be gone?" Max asked, quickly growing impatient that she couldn't one of the people be waiting at the motel.

"Hell if I know. I'm just in charge of keeping you dipshits out of trouble," Steve said, running his hands through his hair. Jonathon, Nancy, Joyce, and Hopper had headed to the motel to figure out where Jane and Mike could possibly be. Hopper had called a half an hour ago saying that based on what was in the room, there weren't any leads. They figured they should just wait them out, at least for the night. Joyce had called Karen, explaining that Mike and Will wanted to have a sleepover. Karen was skeptical, so Joyce had to really pull on the whole 'sympathy for Will' thing.

"I knew we should have told Hopper from the start," Will muttered.

"It doesn't matter now," Lucas said, looking down at his hands.

"I'm sure they'll be back soon," Dustin said, looking up at Steve hopefully.

"Yeah, buddy. I'm sure they will," Steve replied, ruffling Dustin's hair, but Steve had his doubts. They really had no way of tracking Jane and Mike down... He just hoped they returned to the motel soon.

Jane was asleep for most of the ride back to Hawkins. She was drained, but not nearly as bad as when she'd killed the Mindflayer. Mike didn't really want to sleep. Not that he didn't trust Kali's friends, but Mike felt much more comfortable being awake. When they were entering the familiar scenery of the neighboring towns, Mike guessed it was sometime around 9pm. They had been gone for almost 13 hours.

"Mike," Jane said, shifting in her sleep.

"I'm right here," he responded, pulling her into his arms. Mike's side was still very tender, but thanks to Kali, the gauze was thick enough for the wound not to feel irritated by movement. Mike hoped his mom wouldn't notice it before it was healed up, though. He'd have a hard time explaining that.

"Hi," Jane said dryly, opening her brown eyes widely.

"You're up," Mike noticed, smiling. He was so glad she was alright. Looking down at her now, Mike almost couldn't believe that someone so soft and sweet had killed dozens of men merely hours before. Jane seemed to notice Mike's change of expression.

"Are you scared of me?" she asked. She looked to be near breaking point. Mike made an effort to soften his expression.

"No Jane, I could never be scared of you," he told her. "You're practically a hero to me. Like... Superman or Luke Skywalker," Mike explained. Jane's anxious expression melted away. She nuzzled her head closer to his and closed her eyes in content.

"Uh... guys," Funshine said, breaking the couple from their spell.

"Oh no," Mick said as they pulled into the motel parking lot.

"What is it?" Mike asked, trying to see out the windows of the van. As they pulled closer, he got a better view.

There was a large car that read 'Hawkins Chief of Police' on the side. In the cab, Mike could see what looked like Hopper, Joyce, Jonathon, and Nancy.

"Not good," Jane agreed.

"Hey, isn't that your adoptive dad, Jane?" Axel asked.

"No shit, Sherlock," Mick said, giving him a light punch from the driver's seat.

"I'm guessing you didn't tell him about our little field trip today?" Kali

synthesized.

"Well someone did," Mike said, wondering which one of the party had sold them out. Mouthbreather.

Mick parked in the front row of the lot, while Hopper's car was in the back. Kali got out, followed by Dottie. Funshine helped Mike get out of the van, and Jane, who was feeling much better, walked out without help.

Kali pulled Jane into a hug before Hopper could make his way over.

"Thank you, Jane. I could never have done this without you. You will always be my sister," Kali said, leaning out of the hug to look Jane in the eye. "Now we can close this chapter of our lives in peace."

"Thank you, Kali," Jane said simply. Mike saw the empathy in both of their eyes and felt an honest bond between the girls.

"I guess this is goodbye," Dottie said. Each of Kali's friends pulled Jane into a hug. Axel ruffled her hair. Even Mike got a hug from Kali and Dottie. Axel gave him a light punch and Mick gave him the awkward side hug. Funshine went to grab their bags from the motel while the others filed back into the van.

"Where will you go?" Jane asked Kali.

"We don't know. But I have a feeling that if you ever need me, you'll be able to find out," was her reply. Jane couldn't help the grin that spread onto her face.

"Okay, now who's going to tell me what the HELL you've been up to?!" Hopper asked, completely ruining the moment. With perfect timing, Funshine came down the steps and threw the bags into the back.

"Bye Jane!" the group chorused as they drove out of the parking lot like a bat out of hell.

"Mike! Are you alright? Where were you? What happened?" Nancy interrogated, running up and pulling Mike into a bear hug.

"Ow, uh, watch my side. I got a bruise," Mike downplayed.

"Let me see, sweetheart," Joyce said, coming up to Mike.

"Uh..." Mike prolonged, looking to Jane for guidance. This was not going to go well.

"I'm sorry," Jane said, effectively taking the heat off of Mike and his 'bruise'.

"You'd better be sorry! What the hell were you thinking?! You honestly went looking for that PSYCHO!? What if he'd have taken you all in? I thought we were *clear*! Lay low and stay safe!" Hopper yelled, exasperated.

"I know. And I'm sorry," Jane said earnestly.

"Why are you making it so hard for me to be mad at you?" Hopper exhaled, pulling Jane into a tight hug.

"I have nothing to be mad about anymore," Jane whispered into his chest. Hopper tried to stay mad, but hearing that made his chest tighten.

"You should have told me about this little 'deal'," Hopper said, trying to keep his foot down.

"You wouldn't have let me go," she said simply.

"She's right," Jonathon said. Hopper shot him a look.

"Let's get you guys home, okay?" Joyce said.

They all nodded and started walking back to Hopper's car. Jane took Mike's hand, but Nancy still noticed him wincing as he walked.

"Let me just-," Nancy said, pulling up the side of Mike's shirt slyly. Mike didn't have any time to react. "What is that?" Nancy asked loudly, pulling the attention of the others.

"Really Nance?" Mike said, clearly aggravated. "It's nothing."

"That's definitely something," Nancy argued, looking at the well-wrapped bandage.

"What happened?" Joyce asked.

"Just got cut, that's all," Mike said. "It was bleeding a little, but Kali bandaged me up."

"We'll see. I'll check it out when we get back," Joyce decided, clearly unconvinced.

"I see headlights!" Will called, looking out the front window.

Steve rushed over and saw the Chief's car pulling up. "Hey, don't run! I don't want anyone to trip!" Steve called as the teens ran outside to see their friends.

Once everyone headed back inside the Byers' house, Mike was laid on the couch to get his wound examined. He had his head resting on Jane's lap as Joyce knelt next to the sofa to open up the bandage.

"So, what happened?" Dustin asked for probably the tenth time since Jane and Mike had gotten back.

"Shut up, Dustin! They're busy," Lucas reprimanded.

"We're back!" Nancy called, as she and Jonathon walked back inside with a pizza. Everyone was starving, especially Mike and Jane, having not eaten since breakfast.

Joyce carefully removed Mike's bandage. Mike only winced a little, since the pain was very dull now. The whole area was simply tender, but not striking pain.

"I think he needs stiches," Hopper commented. He was leaning over Joyce's shoulder as she inspected the wound.

"No way," Mike said. "If my mom finds out, I am toast."

"Well, newsflash: Jane is going to be grounded... like forever. And I have half a mind to ground you from seeing her," Hopper said.

"No," Jane said in her scary voice.

"I said half a mind. I know how well that worked out for me last time. And windows are kind of expensive," Hopper teased. "But, really, kid. If you don't get this stitched up it'll scar."

"Ugh, whatever. My mom just *cannot* find out. By the way, Nancy, what did you tell Mom?" Mike asked.

"You're spending the night at Will's. I'm at Ally's, and Max is at Jane's. Lucas and Dustin are at each other's houses," Nancy explained. "We covered all the bases."

"Thank you," Mike told her.

"Alright. Let's get you kids some pizza. Then I'll take Mike to Dr. Owen's to get him stitched up," said Hopper.

"Are you sure you want to take her home tonight, Hop?" Joyce asked when all the teens were heading to sleep.

"I think it'd be better to head home," he replied. Jane had fallen asleep on the couch and Hopper carefully picked her up and started heading to his car.

"Call me in the morning!" Joyce said as Hopper left.

"Yep," Hopper called as he got Jane in the cab.

"Mike, you have to get up," Nancy said.

"Why?" Mike mumbled, still half asleep. He was suddenly reminded of the day before when he rolled onto his side and felt his stitches.

"If you don't go to school, Mom's going to get suspicious. I know it sucks, but Dr. Owens gave you a doctor's note for gym," Nancy reminded him.

"Fine," Mike grumbled, getting up slowly. This was going to be a long day.

25. Chapter 25

Thank you to everyone who has read this and enjoyed! I am so thankful.

Jane didn't sir the entire car ride home. She was pretty exhausted, as Hopper could imagine. When they pulled up to the house, Hopper walked around to carry her inside.

"Dad?" she muttered, stirring.

"Yep. Go back to sleep, I'm just getting you inside," Hopper told her, picking her up bridal style. Hopper got Jane into her bed. He pulled off her shoes and tucked her in. Laying a quick kiss on her forehead, Hopper left her bedroom, pulling the door only partially shut behind him.

Jane woke up from a dreamless sleep. Glancing at her clock on the nightstand, it was a little past noon. Yawning, Jane got out of bed. She realized she was still in clothes from the night before, which reminded her of everything that had happened yesterday. That explained the headache, she thought. Jane pushed those thoughts to the back of her mind. Right now she only wanted one thing: eggos.

"Hey," Hopper said when Jane walking from the hallway to the living room where he was reading the paper from his recliner.

"Hi," Jane grumbled.

"I'll go throw your eggos in," Hopper rolled his eyes knowingly. Jane grinned and shuffled to the kitchen table. While the waffles were toasting, Hopper tried to pry his way into how yesterday had gone down.

"So, I'm not mad, but I need to know what the hell happened yesterday," Hopper explained. He'd been trying to control his temper for the last couple of months, and he was doing very well. Jane seemed to respond better to warmth anyways, which was probably

why she liked Mike so much. He was always the nicest to her. "So," he continued, putting her waffles on a plate. "I'll give you the eggos when you start talking."

Jane rolled her eyes. Hopper held the plate away from her, raising his eyebrows. With an unenthusiastic shrug, Jane relented.

"Fine." Hopper put the plate in front of her and handed her the syrup.

Jane and Hopper talked at the kitchen table for over an hour. She explained everything that had happened last year when she had met Kali, and what happened the day before. Hopper got riled up at some parts, like the fact that Jane and Kali had literally walked right into a lab where Dr. Psycho himself was operating. Hopper took a few deep breaths to keep from getting angry. He wasn't pleased that his adoptive daughter had killed almost thirty people, but hey, what are you gonna do?

Mike felt like absolute shit. His side, though significantly better because of Dr. Owens middle of the night stitch job, was still extremely sore. Mike also was running on only four hours of sleep. He basically sleep-walked his way through the day. Mike really wanted to see Jane, but by the time school was let out, all he wanted to do was sleep in his own bed and be babied by his mom. On the car ride home, Mike decided to open up a little to Nancy, considering how she had saved his ass last night with her cover story.

"I definitely owe you, Nance. I'm sorry I'm such a shit brother," Mike said as Nancy drove to their house.

"Yeah, you seriously do," Nancy agreed, causing both siblings to laugh. "I just want you to know, Mike, you can open up to me. I'll always be here for you, no matter how annoying you can be."

"Thanks. I know... I'll try to be better about that. I missed hanging out with you before you got too cool for all my nerdy stuff. I guess, now's our second chance to be better," Mike said, not even knowing he'd felt that way until he started talking.

"Don't get all mushy with me, Mike. I'm still too cool for your nerd

shit," Nancy joked. Mike laughed.

"I know," he agreed, laughing. They pulled up to the house and Mike took a deep breath, ready to act like he wasn't in pain so his mom wouldn't be suspicious. The pair walked inside their house.

"Hey kids, how was school?" Mrs. Wheeler called from the kitchen.

"Good!" both of them replied, heading up the stairs. Mike immediately collapsed on his bed and instantly fell asleep. Nancy rolled her eyes and tucked him in, grateful that he'd made it back yesterday. Nancy didn't know what she'd do without him.

Jane was getting in the shower to clean off all the grime from yesterday. She left the door partially open, like she always did and stepped into the hot water. Immediately, Jane felt relief when the heat hit her shoulders. She let the water massage her back for a while, just enjoying the feeling. Jane tried to push the thoughts away, but she couldn't. Images of killing Papa plagued her thoughts. She didn't feel fear from them. Jane just felt... embarrassed? She really wasn't sure. Jane was definitely glad that he was dead, but she wished she wasn't the one who took his life. She'd killed lots before, another thing she wasn't proud of, and the worst part was that she didn't feel guilty. Mike would feel guilty, she thought. Mike had always been a better person than her. Jane looked down at her arm. 011, a permanent reminder that she'd never be a normal person, like Max and Mike and Dustin and Lucas, and even Will. Sighing, Jane finished her shower and stepped out in her towel. She got dressed and went back into the living room, where Hopper was enjoying his 'sick day' by watching some 'trash tv' as he called it.

"What time is it?" Jane asked him.

"Half past five," Hopper replied.

"Can we go to Mike's for dinner?" Jane said.

"Uh- well you can call and ask I guess," Hopper answered, not expecting that. He wouldn't refuse, because if he was being honest, Karen was a great cook. He still had dreams about the roast she'd

made last time...

"Okay. I'll ask."

"Mike," his mother called from downstairs.

"What?" Mike called back, still half asleep.

"The Chief and Jane are coming over for dinner!" she told him. That perked Mike up immediately.

"Coming!"

"That was delicious, Karen," Hopper said, finishing his lasagna.

"There's plenty, if you want seconds, Jim," she told him. Hopper laughed.

"I'm uh, on a diet, so..." Karen smiled.

"Nancy, are you going to help me clean up?" her mom asked her.

"Sure Mom," Nancy replied, standing up and grabbing empty plates. Ted took Holly into the living room with him, which left Mike, Jane, and Hopper at the table.

"So, I was wondering," Mike began.

"Yes?" Jane said.

"I mean, as long as it's okay with you, Hopper, I was wondering if I could take Jane to the Homecoming dance. She really enjoyed the Snowball, so..." Mike trailed off, feeling a little insecure asking this in front of Hopper.

"I'd like that," Jane answered, smiling. Mike looked to the Chief.

"Yeah, that's fine. You kids deserve some fun," he said, cracking a smile.

"Did I just hear what I think I just heard?" Nancy said, coming back

to clear the table some more.

"Uh, yeah," Mike said, embarrassed.

"Awesome! Jane, I can totally take you dress shopping this weekend! And Max too, if she wants to come," Nancy offered.

"Thank you," Jane said, blushing.

"We'd better get going, Kid," Hopper said, standing.

"I'll see you at school tomorrow," Jane told Mike.

"Yeah, I'll see you then," he replied. Hopper took a cue and went to the kitchen to tell Karen thank you for dinner. Mike took the opportunity of privacy to plant a soft kiss on Jane. She grinned and grabbed her coat off the rack.

"Bye, Mike!"

"Goodbye!"

This goodbye was a nice one, because they both knew they'd see the other one very soon.

Epilogue:

Dustin grabbed Margot's hand and led her to the dance floor. Lucas and Max shared a glance like *Dustin is making moves, okay!* Lucas looked at Max, who rolled her eyes and grabbed his hand before he could even ask her to dance. Nancy and Jonathon were also at the dance together. They were sitting at a table with a bunch of other seniors, and Nancy was even on Homecoming court. Will was there as well, sitting at the table with Mike and Jane when, Kelly Watson walked up to him.

"Will, do you wanna dance?"

"Sure," Will said, smiling. Mike couldn't help but feel proud for his friend, who had really come out of his shell in the last couple of weeks. Will denied having a crush on Kelly, who he had danced with

at the Snowball last year, but you never know. Kelly certainly seemed liked him.

Mike felt a familiar smaller hand grip his. He looked down at Jane, who looked absolutely radiant tonight. Nancy had done her one better with this dress. It was pastel purple with a hint of a metallic shine. The neckline was off the shoulder and covered in lace ruffles. The dress accentuated Jane's waist before flaring out at the bottom. More ruffles went down to her mid-calf. Jane's hair was much longer now, and Nancy had teased it to give it the volume that was very trendy, and she had a hair clip on one side to keep it off of her face. Jane had some blush, lip gloss, and eye makeup on that only made her look even more out of this world gorgeous.

"You wanna dance?" she asked him, looking up at him under her lashes. Mike's heart skipped a beat.

"Y-yeah of course!"

This time, Mike didn't have to show her how to dance. They simply held onto each other and swayed along, totally lost in each other.

Nancy looked over from the other side of the high school gym. Jane and Mike were kissing and holding each other.

"They're cute," Jonathon mentioned, following Nancy's gaze.

"Totally," she agreed, pulling on Jonathon's tie to pull him into a kiss.

"I did kiss her, I swear!" Dustin said in the Wheeler's basement.

"I didn't see it, I need proof," Lucas argued.

"Just hand over the money, Stalker," Max said. She and Lucas had made a bet that Dustin wouldn't kiss Margot at the dance and well... Max wanted the five bucks she deserved for giving Dustin the benefit of the doubt.

"Fine, whatever," Lucas mumbled, opening his wallet.

"I'm proud of you, Dustin," Will said, giving Dustin a pat on the back.

"At least I have *one* supportive friend," Dustin exclaimed, causing lots of "hey, I'm supportive," from everyone else.

"Hey, guys! It's getting late," Mrs. Wheeler called down the steps.

"Okay!" Mike replied, standing up to put the snacks away from their 'after-homecoming-party'.

"I'll see you guys on Monday," Will said, heading upstairs to where Jonathon and Nancy were hanging out in the living room.

"See you Monday," Lucas and Max said, heading upstairs as well.

"Don't have too much fun down here," Dustin said as he left Mike and Jane alone in the basement.

"Shut up, asshole," Mike replied, rolling his eyes.

Once they were alone, Mike and Jane snuggled up on the couch together.

"I had a lot of fun with you tonight," Mike told her.

"Me too. I like dancing," she said. Mike couldn't help but laugh at her enthusiasm.

"You might be better at it than me," Mike teased.

"Well, it's only fun with you," Jane said. Mike blushed. Jane sighed contentedly in the silence. Was this what it was like to be normal? She hoped so, because this was the best feeling in the world. "Do you know about black holes?" Jane asked Mike, looking up at him.

"Oh yeah. I mean- they're this thing in space that kind of sucks everything up in its path. Why?"

"Do you think I'm a black hole? Hopper thought he was one," Jane said. Mike considered what she was getting at and realized it was metaphorical.

"No, Jane. You aren't a black hole. I don't think Hopper is either. I just think... maybe you have to have felt the worst to be able to appreciate the best," Mike explained.

"Oh," Jane said with relief. "So, now is the best?" she asked.

"I guess you could say that," Mike responded, his cheeks getting hot as she moved her face closer to his. Jane kissed Mike, leaning into him. She felt the most whole she'd felt in forever.

"You've always been the best," Jane whispered, leaning away. Mike couldn't help but grin.

Hopper picked Jane up from Mike's and soon they were on the way home.

"How was it?" he asked.

"Great," Jane replied, her smile revealing those adorable dimples.

"I'm glad to hear it," Hopper responded.

"You aren't a black hole," Jane said after a pause.

"What are you talking about?"

"I think you're just scared to feel the best," Jane told him.

"Hm," Hopper said. "Maybe."

"So, it's okay to tell Will's mom that you like her. Because she won't get sucked in to the black hole," Jane said bluntly. Hopper nearly gasped.

"Wait a minute- What are you getting at?" Hopper asked, shocked.

"It's obvious that you like her. So just tell her," Jane said, not seeing a problem with what she was saying.

"You're going to be the death of me, Kid. I swear," Hopper grumbled. In the back of his mind somewhere, Jane's words did give him a little

confidence...

"You look chipper this morning, Hop," Steve said when the Chief walked into the station.

"Good weekend?" Steve asked.

"You could say that," Hopper said, reminiscing on his date with Joyce.

"Bout time," Flo whispered to Steve as Hopper made his way to his office, smoking a cigarette and grabbing a donut.

I hope you all enjoyed this story because I have a really fun time writing it! Stay tuned for a sequel, I am definitely interested in adding onto what I've created in this story! Anyways, thank you to everyone who took the time to read this story, it means so much to me.